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PREFACE.

IN the autumn of 1846, I left home for, as I supposed, a few weeks, to visit some of my family and friends. At Liverpool, I was invited by my friends, Mr. and Mrs. Richard V. Yates, to accompany them in their proposed travels in the East. By the zeal and kindness of those who saw what a privilege this journey would be, all obstacles in the shape of business and engagements were cleared away; and in a month, I was ready to set out with my kind friends.—At Malta, we fell in with Mr. Joseph C. Ewart, who presently joined our party, and remained with us till we reached Malta on our return. There is nothing that I do not owe to my companions for their unceasing care and indulgence: but one act of kindness I felt particularly. They permitted me to read to them my Egyptian journal; (there was no time for the others) that I might have the satisfaction of knowing whether they

agreed in my impressions of the facts which came under our observation. About these facts there is an entire agreement between them and me.—For the opinions expressed in this book, no one is answerable but myself.

It is by permission of my companions that I have thus named them here, and spoken of them in my book as occasion required. I am truly obliged to them for granting me this freedom, by which I am spared much trouble of concealment and circumlocution which, in their opinion and mine, the personal affairs of travel are not important enough to require and justify.—Not having asked a similar permission from our comrades in our Arabian journey, I have said as little as possible about them, and suppressed their names. I shall be glad if they find anything in my narrative to remind them pleasantly of that remarkable season of our lives, —our five weeks' abode in the Desert.

Sir G. Wilkinson must be almost tired of the testimonies and thanks of grateful travellers: but I must just say that he was, by his books, a daily benefactor to us in Egypt. It is really cheering to find that any one *can* be so accurate, and on so large a scale, as his works prove him to be. Such almost faultless correctness

requires an union of intellectual and moral powers and training which it is encouraging for those who are interested in the results of travel to contemplate. After making the fullest use of his "Modern Egypt and Thebes," we find only about half-a-dozen points in which we differ from him.

In regard to that difficult matter,—difficult to those who do not understand Arabic,—the spelling of the names of places and persons in Egypt and Arabia,—I have done what every one will allow to be the safest thing;—I have followed the authority of Mr. Lane wherever I could. If any English reader complains of me for altering the look of familiar Egyptian names, it is enough to reply that Mr. Lane knows better than any one, and that I copy from him. If I have departed from his method anywhere, it is merely because I had not his authority before me in those particular instances.

H. M.

AMBLESIDE,

25th March, 1848.

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.



PART I.

EGYPT AND ITS FAITH.

CHAPTER I.

First sight of Africa.—First sights in Africa.—Alexandria	PAGE 3
---	-----------

CHAPTER II.

From Alexandria to Cairo.—First sight of the Pyramids.— Preparations for Nile Voyage	17
---	----

CHAPTER III.

Nile Incidents.—Crew.—Birds.—Face of the country.—The Heavens.—Towns and shores, between Cairo and Asyoot	33
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

Asyoot.—Old sites.—Some elements of Egyptian thought.— First crocodiles.—Soohadj.—Girgeh.—Kenneh	52
---	----

CHAPTER V.

Walks ashore.—First sight of Thebes.—Adfoo.—Christmas Day	80
--	----

CHAPTER VI.

Aswán.—Slaves.—First ride in the Desert.—Quarries.— Elephantine.—River scenery.—Preparations for Nubia. —First sight of Philæ	96
---	----

CHAPTER VII.

Ascent of the Cataract	1
----------------------------------	---

CHAPTER VIII.

Nubia.—The Second Cataract	1
--------------------------------------	---

CHAPTER IX.

Historical Sketch, from Menes to the Roman occupation of Egypt	1
--	---

CHAPTER X.

Aboo-Simbil.—Egyptian conceptions of the gods	
---	--

CHAPTER XI.

Ibreem.—Dirr.—Subooa.—Dakkeh.—Garf Hoseyn	
---	--

CHAPTER XII.

Dendoor.—Kaláb'-sheh.—Biggeh.—Philæ.—Leaving Nubia	
--	--

CHAPTER XIII.

Kóm Umboo.—Quarries of Silsileh.—Adfoo.—Eilethyia.—Old Egyptian life.—Isna.—Arment	
--	--

CHAPTER XIV.

THEBES.—European travellers and native Arabs.—The Pair.—The Ramaséum.—El-Kurneh	
---	--

CHAPTER XV.

THEBES.—Old Egyptian views of Death and Hereafter.—The Priests.—Interments.—Tomb of Osirei	
--	--

PAGE

119

196

of

147

194

210

230

262

284

300

PART I.

EGYPT AND ITS FAITH.

"They are extremely religious, and surpass all men in the worship they render to the gods."

Herodotus, II. 37.

"Wherefore they were highly celebrated by Apollo's oracle (recorded by Porphyrius) and preferred before all other nations for teaching rightly 'that hard and difficult way, that leadeth to God and happiness.'"

Cudworth. Intellectual System, Book I. 4.

"For, as for the uttermost antiquity, which is like Fame that muffles her head, and tells tales, I cannot presume much of it; for I would not willingly imitate the manner of those that describe maps, which when they come to some far countries, whereof they have no knowledge, set down how there be great wastes and deserts there: so I am not apt to affirm that they knew little, because what they knew is little known to us."

Bacon. Interpretation of Nature, ch. V.

EGYPT AND ITS FAITH.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST SIGHT OF AFRICA.—FIRST SIGHTS IN AFRICA.— ALEXANDRIA.

MY first sight of Africa was on a somewhat lurid November evening, when the descending sun marked out by its red light a group of purple rocks to the westward, which had not been visible till then, and which presently became again invisible when the sun had gone down behind them, and the glow of the sky had melted away. What we saw was the island of Zembra, and the neighbouring coast of Tunis. Nothing in Africa struck me more than this its first phantom appearance amidst the chill and gathering dusk of evening, and with a vast expanse of sea heaving red between us and it.

My next sight of Africa was when I came on deck early on the morning of the 20th of November. A Lybian headland was looming to the south-east. Bit by bit, more land appeared, low and grey: then the fragments united, and we had before us a continuous line of coast, level, sandy and white, with an Arab

tower on a single eminence. Twice more during the day we saw such a tower, on just such an eminence. The sea was now of a milky blue, and lustrous, as if it were one flowing and heaving opal. Presently it became of the lightest shade of green. When a tower and a ruined building were seen together, every one called out "Alexandria!" and we expected to arrive by noon: but we passed the tower and ruins, and saw only a further stretch of low and sandy coast. It was three o'clock before we were in harbour.—When we came on deck after dinner, we found that we were waiting for a pilot; and that we ought to be growing impatient, as there was only an hour of daylight left, and the harbour could not be entered after dark. There was no response from a pilot-boat which we hailed; and one of our boats was sent off to require the attendance of the pilot, who evidently thought he could finish another piece of business before he attended to ours. He was compelled to come; and it was but just in time. The stars were out, and the last brilliant lights had faded from the waters, before we anchored. As we entered the harbour, there was to the south-west, the crowd of windmills which are so strange an object in an African port: before us was the town, with Pompey's Pillar rising behind the roofs: further north, the Pasha's palace and hareem, with their gardens and rows of palms coming down to the margin of the sea: further round, the lighthouse; and to the east, at the point of the land, a battery. The Pasha's men-of-war, which do not bear well a noon-day examination, looked imposing amidst the brilliant lights and deep shadows of evening, their red flag, with its crescent and single star,

floating and falling in the breeze and lull. But for the gorgeous light, there would have been nothing beautiful in the scene, except the flag (the most beautiful in the world) and the figure of our pilot as he stood robed, turbaned and gesticulating on the paddle-box;—a perfect feast to western eyes: but the light shed over the flat and dreary prospect a beauty as home-felt as it does over the grey rain-cloud when it brings out the bow. As we were turning and winding into the harbour, a large French steamer was turning and winding out,—setting forth homewards,—her passengers on deck, and lights gleaming from her ports. Before we came to anchor, she was aground; and sorry we were to see her lying there when we went ashore.

Before our anchor was down, we had a crowd of boats about us, containing a few European gentlemen and a multitude of screaming Arabs. I know no din to be compared to it but that of a frog concert in a Carolina swamp. We had before wondered how our landing was to be accomplished; and the spectacle of the departure of some of our shipmates did not relieve our doubts. We could not pretend to lay about us with stout sticks, as we saw some amiable gentlemen do, purely from the strength of their philosophical conviction that this is the only way to deal with Arabs. Mr. E. had gone ashore among the first, to secure rooms for us: and what we three should have done with ourselves and our luggage without help, there is no saying. But we had help. An English merchant of Alexandria kindly took charge of us; put our luggage into one boat and ourselves into another, and accompanied us ashore. The silence of our little

passage from the ship to the quay was a welcome respite: but on the quay we found ourselves among a crowd of men in a variety of odd dresses, and boys pushing their little donkeys in among us, and carts pulled hither and thither,—every body vociferating and hustling in the starlight. Our luggage was piled upon a long cart, and we followed it on foot: but there was an immediate stoppage about some Custom House difficulty,—got over we know not how. Then the horse ran away, broke his girths, and scattered some of our goods. At last, however, we achieved the walk to our hotel;—a walk through streets not narrow for an eastern city. All the way we had glimpses of smoking householders in their dim interiors, turbaned artisans, and yellow lamplight behind latticed windows. The heat was oppressive to us, after our cool days at sea.—The rest of the evening was fatiguing enough.

The crowd of Bombay passengers hurrying over their preparations, their letter-writing and their tea, in order to start for Cairo at nine o'clock; the growling and snarling of the camels, loading in the Square; the flare of the cressets;—the heat, light, noise and hurry were overpowering after the monotony of sea life. I sought repose in letter-writing, and had nearly forgotten our actual position when I was spoken to by a departing ship-mate, and, looking up, saw a Greek standing at my elbow, an Arab filling up the door-way, and a Nubian nursemaid coming in for a crying child.—Before ten o'clock, all was comparatively quiet,—the Square clear of omnibuses, camels, and the glare of torches, and our Hotel no

longer a scene of crowding and confusion. There was nothing to prevent our having a good night, in preparation for our first day of African sight-seeing.

When I looked out of my window early the next morning, I saw, at the moment, nothing peculiarly African. The Frank Square is spacious, and the houses large; but they would be considered shabby and ugly any where else. The consular flag-staves on the roofs strike the eye; and the flood of brilliant sunlight from behind the minaret made the mornings as little like England in November as could well be. Presently, however, a string of camels passed through the Square, pacing noiselessly along. I thought them then, as I think them now, after a long acquaintance with them, the least agreeable brutes I know. Nothing can be uglier,—unless it be the ostrich; which is ludicrously like the camel, in form, gait and expression of face. The patience of the camel, so celebrated in books, is what I never had the pleasure of seeing. So impatient a beast I do not know,—growling, groaning and fretting whenever asked to do or bear any thing,—looking on such occasions as if it longed to bite, if only it dared. Its malignant expression of face is lost in pictures: but it may be seen whenever one looks for it. The mingled expression of spite, fear and hopelessness in the face of the camel always gave me the impression of its being, or feeling itself, a *damned* animal. I wonder some of the old painters of hell did not put a camel into their foreground, and make a traditional emblem of it. It is true, the Arab loves his own camel, kisses its lips, hugs its neck, calls it his darling and his jewel, and declares he loves it exactly

as he loves his eldest son : but it does not appear that any man's affection extends beyond his own particular camel, which is truly, for its services, an inestimable treasure to him. He is moved to kick and curse at any but the domestic member of the species, as he would be by the perverseness and spite of any other ill-tempered creature. The one virtue of the camel is its ability to work without water ; but, out of the desert, I hardly think that any rider would exchange the willing, intelligent and proud service of the horse for that of the camel which objects to every thing, and will do no service but under the compulsion of its own fears.

When the camels had passed, some women entered the Square from different openings. I was surprised to see their faces hardly covered. They pulled their bit of blue rag over, or half over, their faces when any one approached them, as a matter of form ; but in Alexandria, at least, we could generally get a sight of any face we had a mind to see,—excepting, of course, those of mounted ladies. As we went up the country, we found the women more and more closely veiled, to the borders of Nubia, where we were again favoured with a sight of the female countenance.

The next sight in the Square was a hareem, going out for a ride ;—a procession of ladies on asses,—each lady enveloped in a sort of balloon of black silk, and astride on her ass,—her feet displaying a pair of bright yellow morocco boots. Each ass was attended by a running footman ; and the officer of the hareem brought up the rear.

By this time, my friends were ready for a cup of coffee and a walk before breakfast : and we went forth

to see what we could see. After leaving the Square, we made our way through heaps of rubbish and hillocks of dust to the new fortifications, passing Arab huts more sordid and desolate-looking than I remember to have seen in other parts of the country. We met fewer blind and diseased persons than we expected ; and I must say that I was agreeably surprised, both this morning and throughout my travels in Egypt, by the appearance of the people. About the dirt there can be no doubt ;—the dirt of both dwellings and persons ; and the diseases which proceed from want of cleanliness : but the people appeared to us, there and throughout the country, sleek, well-fed and cheerful. I am not sure that I saw an ill-fed person in all Egypt. There is hardship enough of other kinds,—abundance of misery to sadden the heart of the traveller ; but not that, as far as we saw, of want of food. I am told, and no doubt truly, that this is partly owing to the law of the Kurán by which every man is bound to share what he has, to the last mouthful, with his brother in need : but there must be enough, or nearly enough food for all, whatever be the law of distribution. Of the progressive depopulation of Egypt for many years past, I am fully convinced ; but I am confident that a deficiency of food is not the cause, nor, as yet, a consequence. While I believe that Egypt might again, as formerly, support four times its present population, I see no reason to suppose, amidst all the misgovernment and oppression that the people suffer, that they do not still raise food enough to support life and health. I have seen more emaciated, and stunted, and depressed men, women and children in a single walk in England,

than I observed from end to end of the land of Egypt.— So much for the mere food question. No one will suppose that in Egypt a sufficiency of food implies, as with us, a sufficiency of some other things scarcely less important to welfare than food.

We saw this morning a *sakia** for the first time,— little thinking how familiar and interesting an object the *sakia* would become to us in the course of three months, nor how its name would for ever after call up associations of the flowing Nile, and broad green fields, and thickets of sugar-canes, and the melancholy music of the waterwheel, and the picturesque figures of peasant children, driving the oxen in the shady circuit of the weed-grown shed. This, the first we saw, was a most primitive affair, placed among sand hillocks foul with dirt, and its wooden cogwheels in a ruinous state. We presently saw a better one in the garden of the German Consul. It was on a platform, under a trellice of vines. The wheel, which was turned by a blind-folded ox, had rude earthen jars bound on its vanes, its revolutions emptying these jars into a trough, from which the water was conducted to irrigate the garden.

In this garden, as in every field and garden in Egypt, the ground was divided off into compartments, which are surrounded by little ridges, in order to retain whatever water they receive. Where there is artificial irrigation, the water is led along and through these ridges, and distributed thus to every part. I found here the first training of the eye to that angularity which is the main characteristic of form in Egypt. It seems to have been a decree of the old gods of Egypt that angularity

* Waterwheel.

should be a prime law of beauty ; and the decree appears to have been undisputed to this day : and one of the most surprising things to a stranger is to feel himself immediately falling into sympathy with this taste, so that he finds in his new sense and ideas of beauty a fitting avenue to the glories of the temples of the Nile.

The gardens of Alexandria looked rude to our European eyes ; but we saw few so good afterwards. In the damp plots grew herbs, and especially a kind of mallow, much in use for soups : and cabbages, put in among African fruits. Among great flowering oleanders, Marvel of Peru, figs and oranges, were some familiar plants, cherished, I thought, with peculiar care under the windows of the consular houses ;—monthly roses, chrysanthemums, Love-lies-bleeding, geraniums, rose-mary, and, of course, the African marigold. Many of these plots are overshadowed by palms,—and they form, in fact, the ground of the palm-orchards, as we used to call them. Large clusters of dates were hanging from under the fronds of the palms ; and these were usually the most valuable product of the garden. The consular gardens are not, of course, the most oriental in aspect. We do not see in them, as in those belonging to Arabs, the reservoir for Mohammedan ablution, nor the householder on the margin winding on his turban after his bath, or prostrating himself at his prayers.

The contrast is great between these gardens and the sites of Cleopatra's Needle and Pompey's Pillar,—curiosities which need not be described, as every one has seen them in engravings. The Needle stands on the burning sands, close to the new fortification wall, whose embankment is eighty feet high, and now rapidly

inclosing the town. The companion obelisk, which was offered to England, but not considered worth bringing away, is now buried in this embankment. There it will not decay ; for there is no such preservative as the sand of Egypt. When, and under what circumstances, will it again see the light ? In a time when it may be recognised as an object known now ? or in an age so distant as that the process of verification must be gone over again ? Every one now knows that these obelisks are of the time of the early Pharaohs, some of whose names they bear inscribed ; that they stood originally at Heliopolis, and were transported to Alexandria by the Cæsars.

The Pillar stands in a yet more desolate place. We reached it through the dreariest of cemeteries, where all was of one dust-colour,—even to the aloe which was fixed upon every grave. The graves were covered with mortar, much of which was broken and torn away. A Christian informant told us that this was done by foxes and dogs ; but a Mohammedan declared that such ravage was prevented by careful watching. There is a rare old book which happily throws light on what this Pillar was. In the twelfth century, while the Crusaders were ravaging Syria, a learned physician of Bagdad, named Abdallatif, visited Egypt, and dwelt a considerable time there. He afterwards wrote an admirable account of whatever he himself saw in the country ; and his work has been translated by some Arabic scholars. The best translation is by De Sacy (Paris, 1810.)—Abdallatif tells us that the column (now called by us Pompey's Pillar) which is so finely seen from the sea, was called by the Arabs "the pillar of the colonnades :—" that he had himself seen the remains of

above four hundred columns of the same material, lying on the margin of the sea: and he tells us how they came there. He declares that the governor of Alexandria, the officer put in charge of the city by Saladeen, had overthrown and broken these columns to make a breakwater! "This," observes Abdallatif, "was the act of a child, or of a man who does not know good from evil." He continues, "I have seen also, round the pillar of the colonnades, considerable remains of these columns; some entire, others broken. It was evident from these remains that the columns had been covered by a roof which they supported. Above the pillar is a cupola supported by it. I believe that this was the Portico where Aristotle taught, and his disciples after him; and that this was the Academy which Alexander erected when he built the city, and where the Library was placed which Amrou burned by the permission of Omar."* De Sacy reminds us that the alleged destruction of this Portico must have taken place, if at all, at most thirty years before the visit of Abdallatif; so that as "all the inhabitants of Alexandria, without exception," assured that traveller of the fact, it would be unreasonable to doubt it.† He decides that here we have the far-famed Serapéum. —From the base of the Pillar the view was curious to novices. The fortifications were rising in long lines, where groups of Arabs were at work in the crumbling, whitish, hot soil; and files of soldiers were keeping watch over them. To the south-east, we had a fine view of Lake Mareotis, whose slender line of shore

* Abdallatif. *Relation de l'Egypte*. Livre I. ch. 4. † Appendix A.

seemed liable to be broken through by the first ripple of its waters. The space between it and the sea was one expanse of desolation. A strip of vegetation,—some marsh, some field, and some grove,—looked well near the lake; and so did a little settlement on the canal, and a latteen sail, gliding among the trees.

We had a better view than this, one morning, from the fort on Mont Cretin. I believe it is the best point for a survey of the whole district; and our thinking so seemed to give some alarm to the Arabs, who ceased their work to peep at us from behind the ridges, and watch what we did with telescope, map and compass. The whole prospect was bounded by water,—by the sea and Lake Mareotis,—except a little space to the north-east; and that was hidden by an intervening minaret and cluster of houses. Except where some palms arose between us and Lake Mareotis to the south, and where the clustered houses of the town stood up white and clear against the morning sky, there was nothing around us but a hillocky waste, more dreary than the desert because the dreariness here is not natural but induced.—If we could have stood on this spot no longer ago than the times of the Ptolemies (a date which we soon learned to consider somewhat modern) it would have been more difficult to conceive of the present desolation of the scene than it now is to imagine the city in the days of its grandeur. On the one hand, we should have seen, between us and the lake, the circus, with the multitude going to and fro; and on the other, the peopled gymnasia. Where Pompey's Pillar now stands alone, we should have seen the long lines of the colonnades of the magnificent

Serapéum. On the margin of the Old Port, we should then have seen the towers of the noble causeway, the Heptastadium, which connected the island of the Pharos with the mainland. The Great Harbour, now called the New Port, lay afar this day, without a ship or boat within its circuit; and there was nothing but hillocks of bare sand round that bay where there was once a throng of buildings and of people. Thereabouts stood the temple of Arsinoë, and the Theatre, and the Inner Palaces; and there was the market. But now, look where we would, we saw no sign of life but the Arabs at work on the fortifications, and a figure or two in a cemetery near. The work of fortification itself seems absurd, judging by the eye; for there appears nothing to take, and therefore nothing to defend. Except in the direction of the small and poor-looking town, the area within the new walls appears to contain little but dusty spaces and heaps of rubbish, with a few lines of sordid huts, and clumps of palms set down in the midst; and a hot cemetery or two, with its crumbling tombs. I have seen many desolate-looking places, in one country or another; but there is nothing like Alexandria, as seen from a height, for utter dreariness. Our friends there told us they were glad we staid a few days, to see whatever was worth seeing, and be amused with some African novelties; for this was the inhabitants' only chance of inspiring any interest. Nobody comes back to Alexandria that can help it, after having seen the beauty of Cairo, and enjoyed the antiquities of Upper Egypt. The only wonder would be if any one came back to Alexandria who could leave the country in any other way.

Before we quitted Mont Cretin this morning, we looked into a hollow where labourers were digging, and saw them uncover a pillar of red granite,—shining and unblemished. Some were picking away at the massive old Roman walls, for the sake of the brick. It is in such places that the traveller detects himself planning wild schemes for the removal of the dust, and the laying bare of buried cities all along the valley of the Nile.

During the four days of our stay at Alexandria, we saw the usual sights;—the Pasha's palace; the naval arsenal; and the garden of the Greek merchant where the Pasha goes often to breakfast; and we enjoyed the hospitality of several European residents. We also heard a good deal of politics; not a word of which do I mean to write down. There is so much mutual jealousy among the Europeans resident in Egypt, and, under the influence of this jealousy, there is so little hope of a fair understanding and interpretation of the events of the day, that the only chance a stranger has of doing no mischief is by reporting nothing. I have my own impressions, of course, about the political prospects of Egypt, and the character of its alliance with various European powers; but while every word said by any body is caught up and made food for jealousy, and a plea for speculation on the future, the interests of peace and good-will require silence from the passing traveller, whose opinions could hardly, at the best, be worth the rancour which would be excited by the expression of them.

CHAPTER II.

FROM ALEXANDRIA TO CAIRO.—FIRST SIGHT OF THE
PYRAMIDS.—PREPARATIONS FOR NILE VOYAGE.

ON the 25th of November, we left Alexandria, rising by candle-light at six, and seeing the glorious morning break by the time we were dressed. Our days were now nearly eleven hours long: at the shortest, they would be ten. We were not struck, as we expected to be, by the shortness of the twilight. Instead of the immediate settling down of darkness, after the disappearance of the sun, I found that I could read small print for half an hour after sunset, in our most southerly latitude.

I do not remember to have read of one great atmospheric beauty of Egypt;—the after-glow, as we used to call it. I watched this nightly for ten weeks on the Nile, and often afterwards in the Desert, and was continually more impressed with the peculiarity, as well as the beauty, of this appearance. That the sunset in Egypt is gorgeous, every body knows; but I, for one, was not aware that there is a renewal of beauty, some time after the sun has departed and left all grey. This discharge of colour is here much what it is among the Alps, where the flame-coloured peaks become grey and ghastly as the last sunbeam leaves

them. But here, every thing begins to brighten again in twenty minutes;—the hills are again purple or golden,—the sands orange,—the palms verdant,—the moonlight on the water, a pale green ripple on a lilac surface: and this after-glow continues for ten minutes, when it slowly fades away.

Mr. E. had brought with him his noble dog Pierre, which created a far greater sensation in Alexandria than we did. European men and women are seen every day there; but so large a dog had probably never been known in that region. Women and children, and even men, fled into their houses, or behind walls, at Pierre's approach, every morning during our walks. Pierre was not safe. Between the jealousy of the native dogs, the fears of the Arabs, and the perils of the desert, Pierre had little chance of secure travelling; and so his master sent him home. We left Alexandria without Pierre: but we had a much better servant in the dragoman engaged there by Mr. E.,—Alee Mustafa, — who travelled with us till we reached Alexandria again, the next May, and did his duty by us admirably. He is a native Egyptian, young and strong, able and experienced in his work, and faithful and correct in his money transactions. We met with other travelling parties as content with their dragomen as we were with ours: and I at present remember only one which was cursed with a bad attendant. When we consider what qualifications are requisite in the office, we must see that the dragomen must be a superior class of people. It was one of my amusements to study all whom I met; and when I saw what their knowledge of languages was,—what their

efficiency in daily business, their zeal in travelling, their familiarity with the objects *en route* wherever we went, their temper in times of hurry and disaster, their power of command co-existing with their diligence and kindness in service, I felt that some of us might look very small in our vocations, in comparison with our dragomen.

We proceeded in an omnibus to the Mahmoudieh Canal, where we went on board the boat which was to carry us to Atfeh, at the junction of the canal with the Nile. The boat was taken in tow by a smaller steamer, named by a wag "the little Asthmatic." We heard a good deal of her ailments,—the cracks in her boiler, and so forth; so that we hardly expected to reach Atfeh in due course.—The villas in the neighbourhood of Alexandria are pleasantly surrounded with gardens, and fenced by hedges or palings hung with the most luxuriant creepers; but the houses are of glaring white, and look dreadfully hot.—The villages on the banks are wretched-looking beyond description; the mud huts square, or in bee-hive form; so low and clustered and earthy, that they suggest the idea of settlements of ants or beavers, rather than of human beings. Yet we were every few minutes meeting boats coming down from the country with produce,—various kinds of grain and roots, in heavy cargoes. Some of these boats were plastered with mud, like the houses; and so thickly that grass grew abundantly on their sides.—On the heaps of grain were squatted muffled women and naked children; naked men towed the boats,—now on the bank, and now wading in the mud; and muffled women came out of the villages to

stare. To-day there seemed to be no medium between wrapping up and nakedness ; but it became common, up the country, to see women and girls covering their faces with great anxiety, while they had scarcely any clothing elsewhere.

We saw the other extreme of dress in a passenger on board our boat ;—the chief eunuch of the royal hareem at Cairo. Neither his beautiful dress,—of the finest cloth, amply embroidered,—nor his attendants and appliances could impress me with the slightest sense of dignity in the case of this extraordinary-looking being. He was quiet in his manners, conversed with apparent ease, said his prayers and made his prostrations duly on the top of the kitchen, telling his beads with his long and skinny fingers ; but his emaciation and ugliness baffled all the usual associations with the outward signs of rank. I could not think of him as an official of high station.

This is the canal which, as every body knows, cost the lives of above twenty thousand people, from the Pasha's hurry to have it finished, and the want of due preparation for such a work in such a country. Without tools and sufficient food, the poor creatures brought here by compulsion to work died off rapidly under fatigue and famine. Before the improvements of the Pasha are vaunted in European periodicals as putting European enterprizes to shame, it might be as well to ascertain their cost,—in other things as well as money ;—the taxes of pain and death, as well as of piastres, which are levied to pay for the Pasha's public works. There must be some ground for the horror which impels a whole population to such practices as

are every day seen in Egypt, to keep out of the reach and the ken of government :—practices such as putting out an eye, pulling out the teeth necessary for biting cartridges, and cutting off a forefinger, to incapacitate men for army service. The fear of every other sort of conscription, besides that for the supply of the army, is no less urgent ; and it is a common practice for parents to incapacitate their children for reading and writing by putting out an eye, and cutting off the forefinger of the right hand. Any misfortune is to be encountered rather than that of entering the Pasha's army, the Pasha's manufactories, the Pasha's schools. This can hardly be all baseless folly on the part of the people. If questioned, they could at least point to the twenty-three thousand deaths which took place in six months, in the making of the Mahmoudieh Canal.

The Pasha is proud of this canal, as men usually are of achievements for which they have paid extravagantly. And he still brings his despotic will to bear upon it, in defiance of nature and circumstance. I was told to-day of his transmission of Lord Hardinge by it, when Lord Hardinge and every body else believed the canal to be impassable from want of water. This want of water was duly represented to the Pasha : but as he still declared that Lord Hardinge should go by that way and no meaner one, Lord Hardinge had only to wait and see how it would be managed. He went on board the steamer at Alexandria, and proceeded some way, when a bar of dry ground appeared extending across the canal. But this little inconvenience was to be no impediment. A thousand soldiers appeared on the banks, who waded to the steamer, and fairly

shouldered it, with all its passengers, and carried it over the bar. The same thing happened at the next dry place, and the next: and thus the Pasha is able to say that he forwarded Lord Hardinge by his own steamer on his own great canal.

Nothing can be more dreary than the scenery till within a short distance of Atfeh. The field of Abou-keer was nothing but hillocky desert, with pools in the hollows: and after that, we saw little but brown mud banks, till we came to the acacias near Atfeh. It is a pity that other parts of the canal banks are not planted in the same way. Besides the beauty of the trees,—to-day very pretty, with the light pods contrasting with the dark foliage,—the shade for man and beast, and the binding of the soil by vegetation, would be valuable.

It was dusk before we reached Atfeh. Some moonlight mingled with the twilight, and with the yellow gleams which came from sordid windows, seen through the rigging of a crowd of small vessels. There was prodigious bustle and vociferation while we were passing through the lock, and getting on board the steamer which was to carry us to Cairo. But by seven o'clock we were fairly off on the broad and placid Nile. The moonlight was glorious; and the whole company of passengers sat or lay on deck, not minding the crowding in their enjoyment of the scene, till the dews became so heavy as to send down all who could find room in the cabins.—I have a vivid recollection of that first evening on the Nile,—an evening full of enjoyment, though perhaps every other evening I spent on it showed me more. I saw little but the wide quiet

river,—the broadest, I believe, that I had ever been on; and a fringe of palms on the banks, with here and there a Sheikh's tomb* hiding among them, or a tall white minaret springing above them.

Two ladies kindly offered me a place in their inner cabin, where I could lie down and have the benefit of an open window: but the place was too unclean for rest. At 3 A.M. we went a-ground on a mud bank. I saw the quivering poles of the Arab crew from my window, and was confounded by the noise overhead,—the luggage being shifted with all possible outcry. We just floated for a minute, and then stuck fast again. By the cessation of the noise, I presently found that the matter was given up till daylight; and I slept for above an hour;—a very desirable thing, as these groundings made it appear uncertain whether we should reach Cairo before another night.

When I went on deck, before seven, I found we were opposite Sais. But there was nothing to be done. No one could go ashore; and the best consolation is that there is nothing to be seen there by those who can only mourn over the mounds, and not penetrate them. A mob of Arabs was brought down to our aid; and a curious scene was that of our release. On deck our luggage was piled without any order; and blankets were stuffed in among trunks and bags. From these blankets emerged one fellow-passenger after another, till the set of unshaven and unwashed gentry was complete. In the river was a long line of naked Arabs,

* These Sheikhs' tombs are very like village ovens: square huts, with each a white cupola rising from the walls.

tugging and toiling and screaming till the vessel floated. When we were once more steaming towards Cairo, and the deck was cleared, and the wondrous atmosphere assumed all its glory, and the cool wind breathed upon our faces, we presently forgot the discomforts of the night, and were ready for a day of novelty and charm.

Breakfast was served on deck, under an awning; and greatly was it enjoyed by one of the passengers,—a catholic lady of rank, who was travelling absolutely alone, and shifting for herself very successfully. She helped herself to an entire chicken, every bone of which she picked. While doing so, she was disturbed by the waiters passing behind her, between the two tables; and she taught them by vigorous punches what it was to interfere with her elbows while they were wanted for cutting up her chicken. Immediately after this feat, she went to the cabin, and kneeled down to her prayers, in the face of as many as chose to see. Between this Countess and the Eunuch, there was more religious demonstration on board than we had been accustomed to see in such places.

Till 3 P.M. there was little variety in the scenery. I was most struck with the singular colouring;—the diversity of browns. There was the turbid river, of vast width, rolling between earthy banks; and on these banks were mud villages, with their conical pigeon-houses. The minarets and Sheikhs' tombs were fawn-coloured and white; and the only variety from these shades of the same colour was in the scanty herbage, which was so coarse as to be almost of no colour at all. But the distinctness of outline, the glow of the brown, and the vividness of light and shade, were truly a feast

to the eye.—At 3 o'clock, when approaching Werdán, we saw large spreading acacias growing out of the dusty soil; and palms were clustered thickly about the town; and at last we had something beyond the banks to look at;—a sandy ridge which extends from Tunis to the Nile.—When we had passed Werdán, about 4 P.M., Mr. E. came to me with a mysterious countenance, and asked me if I should like to be the first to see the Pyramids. We stole past the groups of careless talkers, and went to the bows of the boat, where I was mounted on boxes and coops, and shown where to look. In a minute I saw them, emerging from behind a sandhill. They were very small; for we were still twenty-five miles from Cairo; but there could be no doubt about them for a moment; so sharp and clear were the light and shadow on the two sides we saw. I had been assured that I should be disappointed in the first sight of the Pyramids; and I had maintained that I could not be disappointed, as of all the wonders of the world, this is the most literal, and, to a dweller among mountains, like myself, the least imposing. I now found both my informant and myself mistaken. So far from being disappointed, I was filled with surprise and awe: and so far was I from having anticipated what I saw, that I felt as if I had never before looked upon any thing so new as those clear and vivid masses, with their sharp blue shadows, standing firm and alone on their expanse of sand. In a few minutes, they appeared to grow wonderfully larger; and they looked lustrous and most imposing in the evening light.—This impression of the Pyramids was never fully renewed. I admired them every evening from my window at

Cairo; and I took the surest means of convincing myself of their vastness by going to the top of the largest; but this first view of them was the most moving; and I cannot think of it now without emotion.

Between this time and sunset, the most remarkable thing was the infinity of birds. I saw a few pelicans and many cormorants; but the flocks,—I might say the shoals—of wild ducks and geese which peopled the air, gave me a stronger impression of the wildness of the country, and the foreign character of the scenery, than any thing I had yet seen.—We passed by moonlight the spot where the great experiment of the Barrage is to be tried; and here we could distinguish the point of the Delta, and the junction of the other branch, and knew when we had issued upon the single Nile.—Soon after, the groves of Shoobra,—the Pasha's country palace,—rose against the sky, on the eastern shore. Then there were glimmerings of white houses; and then rows of buildings and lights which told of our approach to Boolák, the port of Cairo. The palace of Ismael Pasha, who was burnt at Sennaar twenty-nine years ago, rose above the bank; and then there was a blaze of cressets, which showed where we were to land. A carriage from the Hotel d'Orient awaited our party; and we were driven, under an avenue of acacias, a mile or two to Cairo. By the way, we saw some truly Arabian dwellings by torchlight, which made us long for the morrow.

In the morning I found that my windows looked out upon the Ezbekeeyeh,—the great Square,—all trees and shade, this sunny morning; and over the tree tops rose the Pyramids, apparently only a stone's throw off, though in fact more than ten miles distant. A low

canal runs round the Square, just under my windows; and on its bank was a striking group,—a patriarchal picture;—an Arab leading down his flock of goats to water. The sides of this canal were grass-grown; and the interior of the Square, the area of 400,000 feet within the belt of trees, was green with shrubs, field-crops, and gardens. While I was gazing upon this new scene, and amusing myself with the appearance and gestures of the people who went by on foot, on asses, or on camels, Mr. Y. and Mr. E. were gone to Boolák, to see about a boat which we had heard of as likely to suit us for our voyage up to the First Cataract. At breakfast they brought us the news that they had engaged the boat, with its crew. We afterwards mounted donkeys, and rode off to Boolák to examine this boat, which has the reputation of being the best on the Nile.

As our thoughts and our time were much engaged with the anticipation of our voyage and with preparations for it, so that we did not now see much of Cairo, or open our minds thoroughly to what we did see, I shall say nothing here of the great Arabian city. With me it stands last in interest, as latest in time, of the sights of Egypt: and any account that I can give of it will be the more truthful for coming in its right place,—after the cities of the ancient world.

We found on board our dahabieh the old American merchant to whom it belongs,—his tawny finger graced by a magnificent diamond ring. The Rais,—the captain of the crew, who is responsible for the safety of the boat,—was in waiting to take directions from us about some additional accommodation. We liked this man

from first to last. His countenance struck me this morning as being fine, notwithstanding a slight squint. It had much of the pathetic expression of the Arab countenance, with strong sense, and, on occasion, abundance of fire. His caution about injuring the boat made him sometimes appear indolent when we wanted to push on; and he, seeming to indulge us, would yet moor within half-an-hour: but he worked well with the crew at times,—taking an oar, and handling the ropes himself. For many an hour of our voyage, he sat on the gunwale, singing to the rowers some mournful song, to which they replied in a chorus yet more mournful. The manners of this man were as full of courtesy and kindness as we almost invariably found the manners of the Arabs to be; and there was even an unusual degree of the oriental dignity in his bearing.

The boat was so clean that there was no occasion for us to wait for the usual process of sinking,—to drown vermin. The few additions and alterations necessary could easily be made while we were buying our stores; and, in fact, we were off in five days. Our deck afforded a walk of twelve paces, when the crew were not rowing: and this spacious deck was covered with an awning. The first cabin was quite a saloon. It had a continuous row of windows, and a *deewán* along each side; on the broadest of which the gentlemen's beds were made up at night. We had bookshelves put up here; and there was ample closet accommodation,—for medicines, pickles, tools, paper and string, &c. In the inner cabin, the narrow *deewáns* were widened by a sort of shelf put up to contain the bedding of Mrs. Y. and myself. The floor and ceiling were painted blue, orange and green,

and the many windows had Venetian blinds. It was a truly comfortable chamber, which we inhabited with perfect satisfaction for many weeks.

The bargain made, the gentlemen and Alee were much engaged every day in laying in stores. Mattresses and spices, wine and crockery, maccaroni, campstools, biscuits, candles, a table, fruit, sponges, saucepans, soap, cordage, tea and sugar;—here are a few items of the multitude that had to be attended to. Every morning, the gentlemen were off early to the stores; and the time they gave to sight-seeing with Mrs. Y. and me was accepted as a great favour. Active as we thought them, it was an amusement to us to see that it was possible to be more active still. A young Scotchman who was at our hotel, with a sister and two friends, was always before us, however early we might be, and obtained the first choice of everything, from the dahabieh herself to the smallest article she carried. And all this activity and shrewdness lay under a pale young face, a quiet voice and languid manner, betokening poor health, if not low spirits. On the night of our arrival at Cairo, we did not go to bed till past midnight; and our gentlemen were out at five to see about the dahabieh,—knowing that the competition for boats was then very keen: but the Scotchman had been out at four, and had seen and declined the dahabieh before my friends reached Boolák. Whenever we bought any article, we found that our Scotch neighbour had had his choice before us. We seldom went into the store where we obtained almost everything but he was sitting there, tasting wines or preserves, or handling utensils as if he had been a furniture-monger all his life. It was

presently apparent that he was bent on getting off before us,—on obtaining a good start up the river ; and it is not to be denied that this roused the combativeness of some of our party ; and that our preparations were pressed forward with some view to the question whether the English or Scotch party would get the start. The expectation was that the Scotch would sail on Tuesday, December 1st, and an American party the same day ; while we could not get off till the Wednesday morning, though taking up our abode on board our dahabieh on the Tuesday evening. We were advised to do this, that we might not depart unfurnished with some essential but forgotten article, as was the case with a party who set sail with a fair wind, and were carried exulting up the river for twenty miles, when they found they had no candles. To our surprise, the Scotch party appeared at the late dinner on Tuesday ; and when we accompanied the ladies to their rooms afterwards, to see the shady bonnets they were making for tropical wear, we found they were waiting for the washerman, who had disappointed them of their clothes. So we left the hotel before them.

It was bright moonlight when we set off for Boolák,—a curious cavalcade. Of course, we were on donkeys ; as were such of our goods as had not been removed before. The donkey boys carried,—one, my desk, another, the arrow-root, and a third, the chocolate. It was a merry ride, under the acacias, whose flickering shadows were cast across the road by the clear moon. The tea-things were set in the cabin when we arrived. There was less confusion on board than might have been expected ; and we had a comfortable night.

Our crew consisted of fourteen, including the Rais. Of these, five were Nubians, and the rest Cairenes. We had besides, our dragoman, Alee, and his assistant, Hasan; and the cook,—a grotesque and amusing personage. The hire of the boat and crew, who provided themselves with food, was 40*l.* per month. Times are changed since some acquaintance of ours went up to the Second Cataract, two years since, for 12*l.* Those of our crew who afforded us the most amusement were some of the Cairenes: but we liked best the quiet and peaceable Nubians. When we set off, the whole crew messed together, sitting on their haunches in a circle round their pan of lentile or dourrha pottage. But before we returned, the Cairenes had all quarrelled; and the five Nubians were eating together, as amicably as ever, while each Cairene was picking his bread by himself.

When I came on deck in the morning, I found that we were not to start till the afternoon, and that we must put up with extraordinary confusion till then. There was abundant employment for us all, however, and after breakfast, the gentlemen went up to the city, to make some more purchases, and Mrs. Y. and I sat on deck, under the awning, making a curtain for the cabin, a table-cover, &c. The doings of the Arabs on shore were amusing and interesting enough. Among others, I saw a blind man bringing, as he would say, his donkey down to drink; but the donkey led the man. The creature went carefully down the steep and rough bank, and the man followed, keeping his hands on its hind quarters, and scarcely making a false step.—The Scotch party came down, in the course of the morning,

and presently put off, and went full sail up the river. The American boat was, I believe, already gone. Soon after three, Alee announced that the last crate of fowls was on board; the signal was given, and away we went.

CHAPTER III.

NILE INCIDENTS.—CREW.—BIRDS.—FACE OF THE
COUNTRY.—THE HEAVENS.—TOWNS AND SHORES,
BETWEEN CAIRO AND ASYOOT.

As we swept up the broad river, we passed some fine houses, sheltered by dark masses of acacias; and presenting, to the river, spacious overhanging balconies, and picturesque water-wheels. My friends said this was very like the Bosphorus. Presently, Cairo arose in the distance, backed by the white citadel and the yellow range of the Mokuttam hills, with their finely broken outline. On the western shore was El Geezeh, with its long range of hospital buildings, relieved by massy foliage, behind which towered the Pyramids; and further on were more Pyramids, lessening in the distance. We were aground once and again within an hour; and while we were at dinner, we drove upon a shoal with a great shock. This was not the way to overtake the Scotch party, whose boat could not be supposed ever to get aground; and our Rais was informed that if he stuck again, he should be bastinadoed.—The wind was too fresh to allow of our dining on deck; and the sun was declining behind the palms when we went down to the cabin.—When we came up again, the yellow glow remained, while the rich foliage

of the eastern shore was quivering in the moonlight. Jupiter was as lustrous as if there had been no moon. The breeze now fell, now rose; and the crew set up their wild music,—the pipe and drum, with intervals of mournful song.

I do not know whether all the primitive music in the world is in the minor key: but I have been struck by its prevalence among all the savage, or half-civilised, or uneducated people whom I have known. The music of Nature is all in the minor key;—the melodies of the winds, the sea, the waterfall, birds, and the echoes of bleating flocks among the hills: and human song seems to follow this lead, till men are introduced at once into the new world of harmony and the knowledge of music in the major key. Our crew sang always in unison, and had evidently no conception of harmony. I often wished that I could sing loud enough to catch their ear, amidst their clamour, that I might see whether my second would strike them with any sense of harmony: but their overpowering noise made any such attempt hopeless.—We are accustomed to find or make the music which we call spirit-stirring in the major key: but their spirit-stirring music, set up to encourage them at the oar, is all of the same pathetic character as the most doleful, and only somewhat louder and more rapid. They kept time so admirably, and were so prone to singing, that we longed to teach them to substitute harmony for noise, and meaning for mere sensation. The nonsense that they sing is provoking. When we had grown sad under the mournful swell of their song, and were ready for any wildness of sentiment, it was vexatious to learn from Alee what

they were singing about. Once it was "Put the saddle on the horse. Put the saddle on the horse." And this was all. Sometimes it was "Pull harder. Pull harder." This was expanded into a curious piece of Job's comfort, one evening when they had been rowing all day, and must have been very weary. "Pull hard: pull harder. The nearer you come to Alexandria, the harder you will have to pull. God give help!" Another song might be construed by some vigilant people near the court to have a political meaning. "We have seen the Algerine bird singing on the walls of Alexandria." Another was, "The bird in the tree sings better than we do. The bird comes down to the river to wash itself." The concluding song of the voyage was the best, as to meaning, though not as to music,—in which I must say I preferred the pathetic chaunt about the horse and saddle. As we were approaching Cairo on our return, they sang "This is nearly our last day on the river, and we shall soon be at the city. He who is tired of rowing may go ashore, and sit by the sakia in the shade." I may observe that if the dragoman appears unwilling to translate any song, it is as well not to press for it; for it is understood that many of their words are such as it would give European ears no pleasure to hear.

The water-wagtails were very tame, we observed already. They ran about on the deck, close to our feet as we sat, and looked in at our cabin windows in the most friendly manner. Next morning, we began to acquire some notion of the multitude of birds we were to see in Egypt;—a notion which, I think, could hardly be obtained anywhere else. On a spit of sand,

I saw when I came forth, a flock of pelicans which defied counting, while a flight, no less large, was hovering above. A heron was standing fishing on another point: clouds of pigeons rose above every group of dwellings and clump of palms; and multitudes of geese occupied the air at various heights;—now in strings which extended almost half across the sky,—and now furling and unfurling their line like an immeasurable pennon. The birds of Egypt did not appear to us to be in great variety, or remarkable beauty; but from their multitude, and being seen in all their wildness, they were everywhere a very interesting feature of the scenery. The ostrich I never saw, except tame, in a farmyard; though we had ostrich's eggs in Nubia. We came upon an eagle here and there,—and always where we could most wish to see one. Sometimes, when in the temples, and most interested in the monuments, I caught myself thinking of home, and traced the association to the sparrows which were chirping overhead. I found swallows' nests in these temples, now and then, in a chink of the wall, or a recess of roof or niche. A devout soul of an old Egyptian, returning from its probation of three thousand years, would see that "the sparrow had found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she might lay her young;"—even the altars of the Lord God, so sacred once to the most imposing worship the world ever saw. Vultures are not uncommon. I used to see them sometimes during my early walk on shore, busy about the skull of some dead horse or other carcase. The crested woodpecker was often a pretty object among the mournful piles of ruins at Thebes or elsewhere, hopping about so

spruce and gay ! Where the Arabian hills approached the river, or the shores presented perpendicular rocks, long rows of cormorants sat perched before their holes, as still and staid as so many hermits in contemplation. On every islet and jutting point were flocks of pelicans, whose plumage looked snow-white when set off by a foil of black geese : and now and then, a single bird of this tribe might be seen in the early morning, balancing itself on the little billows, and turning its head about in the coyest manner, to prevent its long beak touching the water. The ibis is elegant in form, and most delicate in plumage, as every one knows who has stroked its snowy feathers. It looked best when standing under the banks, or wading among the reeds in a cove. It looked most strange and out of place when perched on the back of a buffalo, as I occasionally saw it. We once saw five buffalo in one field, with each a delicate white ibis perched on its back. And from the nose of one of these buffalo two little birds were at the same time picking insects, or something else that they relished.

As to the birds which have such a mysterious connexion with the sleeping crocodile, I can give no new information about them. I can only say that on almost every occasion of our seeing a crocodile, two or three of these birds were standing beside him ; and that I never saw them fly away till he had moved. It is believed in the country that these birds relieve the crocodile of the little leeches which infest his throat ; and that they keep watch while he sleeps on the sand, and give him warning to escape on the approach of danger. What the crocodile does for the birds in return, we never

heard. As for the pigeons, they abound beyond the conception of any traveller who has not seen the pigeon flights of the United States. They do not here, as there, darken the air in an occasional process of migration, breaking down young trees on which they alight, and lying in heaps under the attack of a party of sportsmen: but they flourish every where as the most prolific of birds may do under the especial protection of man. The best idea that a stranger can form of their multitude is by supposing such a bird population as that of the doves of Venice inhabiting the whole land of Egypt. The houses of the villages throughout Egypt are surmounted by a sort of battlements built for the pigeons, and supplied with fringes of boughs, inserted, in several rows to each house, for the birds to rest on. The chief object is the dung, which is required for manure for the garden, and for other purposes: but it is a mistake to say that the inhabitants do not eat them. They are taken for food, but not to such an extent as to interfere with the necessary supply of dung. One of our party occasionally shot a few wild ones, near the villages; and he met with no hindrance. But it was otherwise with our Scotch friend. Though he had asked leave, and believed he had obtained it, to let fly upon the pigeons in a village, the inhabitants rose upon him; and his Rais had some difficulty in securing his safe return to his boat. He did it by a device which his employer was shocked to hear of afterwards. He declared our friend to be the Pasha's dentist! To form a notion of the importance of this functionary, it is necessary to remember that the Pasha's having a dentist is one of the most remarkable

signs of our times. That a Mohammedan ruler should have permitted his beard to be handled is a token of change more extraordinary than the adoption of the Frank dress in Turkey, or the introduction of wine at Mohammedan dinners: and the man who was permitted by the Pasha to touch his beard must be regarded throughout the country as a person inestimably powerful with his Highness. Such a personage was our Scotch friend compelled to appear, for some way up the river; and very reluctant he was to bear the dignity to which his assent had not been asked.—A pretty bird of the kingfisher kind apparently, coloured black, grey and tawny, was flitting about on the shore when I took my first walk on shore this morning. And I think I have now mentioned nearly all the birds we observed in the course of our voyage.

Our object, like that of Egyptian travellers generally, was to sail up the river as fast as the wind would carry us, seeing by the way only as much as would not interfere with the progress of the boat. It was the season when the north wind prevailed; and this advantage was not to be trifled with in a voyage of a thousand miles, certain as we were of the help of the current to bring us back. We were therefore to explore no pyramids or temples on our way up; and to see only so much of the country as we could get a glimpse of on occasion of the failure of the wind, or other accidental delays. To this there was no objection in our minds; for we found at once that in going up the Nile in any manner we should meet with as much novelty and interest as we could bear. The face of the country was enough at one time. To have explored its monuments

immediately would have been too much. Moreover, there was great advantage in going up quickly while the river was yet high enough to afford some view of the country. In returning, we found such a change produced by the sinking of the waters only a few feet, that we felt that travellers going up late in the season can hardly be said to have seen the country from the river. At all times, the view of the interior from the Nile must be very imperfect, and quite insufficient to justify any decision against the beauty of the great valley. This arises from the singular structure of the country. Everywhere else, where a river flows through the centre of a valley, the land either slopes from the base of the hills down to the river, or it is level. In Egypt, on the contrary, the land rises from the mountains up to the banks of the Nile: and where, as usually happens, the banks are higher than the eye of the spectator on the deck of his boat, all view of the interior, as far as the hills, is precluded. He sees nothing but the towns, villages, and palm-groves on the banks, and the mountains on the horizon. My attention had been directed upon this point before I went by the complaints of some readers of Eastern travels that, after all their reading, they knew no more what the Egyptian valley looked like than if it had never been visited. As this failure of description appeared to regard Egypt alone, there must be some peculiar cause for it: and thus we found it. The remedy was, of course, to go ashore as often as possible, and to mount every practicable eminence. I found this so delightful, and every wide view that I obtained included so much that was wonderful and beautiful, that mounting

eminences became an earnest pursuit with me. I carried compass and note-book, and noted down what I saw, from eminence to eminence, along the whole valley, from Cairo to the Second Cataract. Sometimes I looked abroad from the top of a pylon; sometimes from a rock on the banks; sometimes from a sandy ridge of the desert; sometimes from a green declivity of the interior; once from a mountain above Thebes, and once from the summit of the Great Pyramid. My conclusion is that I differ entirely from those who complain of the sameness of the aspect of the country. The constituent features of the landscape may be more limited in number than in other tracts of country of a thousand miles: but they are so grand and so beautiful, so strange, and brought together in such endless diversity, that I cannot conceive that any one who has really seen the country can complain of its monotony. Each panoramic survey that I made is now as distinct in my mind as the images I retain of Niagara, Iona, Salisbury Plain, the Valais, and Lake Garda.

Our opportunities of going ashore were not few, even at the beginning of our voyage, when the wind was fair, and we sailed on, almost continuously, for three days. In the early mornings, one of the crew was sent for milk, and he was to be taken up at a point further on. And if, towards night, the Rais feared a rock, or a windy reach ahead, he would moor at sunset; and this allowed us nearly an hour before it was dark enough for us to mind the howling jackals. When the wind ceased to befriend us, the crew had to track almost all day, following the bends of the river; and we could either follow these also, or strike across the fields

to some distant point of the bank. And when on board, there was so much to be seen on the ordinary banks that I was rarely in the cabin. Before breakfast, I was walking the deck. After breakfast, I was sewing, reading, or writing, or idling on deck, under the shade of the awning. After dinner, we all came out eagerly, to enjoy the last hour of sunshine, and the glories of the sunset and the after-glow, and the rising of the moon and constellations. And sorry was I every night when it was ten o'clock, and I must go under a lower roof than that of the dazzling heavens. All these hours of our first days had their ample amusement from what we saw on the banks alone, till we could penetrate further.

There were the pranks of the crew, whose oddities were unceasing, and particularly rich in the early morning. Then it was that they mimicked whatever they saw us do,—sometimes for the joke, but as often with the utmost seriousness. I sometimes thought that they took certain of our practices for religious exercises. The solemnity with which one or another tried to walk the deck rapidly, to dance, and to skip the rope, looked like this. The poor fellow who laid hands on the skipping-rope paid (he probably thought) the penalty of his impiety. At the first attempt, down he came, flat on his face. If Mr. E. looked through his glass, some Ibraheem or Mustafa would snatch up an oar for a telescope, and see marvellous things in the plain. If, in the heat, either of the gentlemen nodded over his book, half the crew would go to sleep instantly, peeping every moment to see the effect.—Then, there were the veiled women coming down to

the river to fill their water-pots. Or the men, at prayer-time, performing their ablutions and prostrations. And there was the pretty sight of the preparation of the drying banks for the new crop ;—the hoeing with the short, heavy antique hoe. And the harrow, drawn by a camel, would appear on the ridge of the bank. And the working of the Shadoofs* was perpetual, and always interesting. Those who know what the shadoof is like, may conceive the picture of its working :—the almost naked Arabs,—usually in pairs,—lowering and raising their skin buckets by the long lever overhead, and emptying them into the trough beside them, with an observance of time as regular as in their singing. Where the bank is high, there is another pair of shadoofs at work above and behind : and sometimes a third, before the water can be sent flowing in its little channels through the fields.—Then, there were the endless manœuvres of innumerable birds, about the islets and rocks : and a buffalo, here and there, swimming from bank to bank, and finding it, at last, no easy matter to gain the land.—Then, there was the ferryboat, with its ragged sail, and its motley freight of turbaned men, veiled women, naked children, brown sheep, frightened asses, and imperturbable buffalo.—Then, there were the long palisades of sugar canes edging the banks ; or the steep slopes, all soft and bright with the springing wheat or the bristling lupins. Then, there were the villages, with their somewhat pyramidal houses, their clouds of pigeons, and their shelter of palms : or, here and there, a town, with its

* Pole and bucket, for raising water.

minarets rising out of its cincture of acacia. And it was not long before we found our sight sharpened to discern holes in the rocks, far or near;—holes so squared at the entrance as to hint of sculpture or painting within.—And then, as the evening drew on, there was the sinking of the sun, and the coming out of the colours which had been discharged by the glare in the middle of the day. The vast and dreary and hazy Arabian desert became yellow, melting into the purple hills; the muddy waters took a lilac hue; and the shadows of the sharp-cut banks were as blue as the central sky. As for the moon, we could, for the first time in our lives, see her the first night;—the slenderest thread of light, of cup-like form, visible for a few minutes after sunset; the old moon being so clearly marked as to be seen by itself after the radiant rim was gone. I have seen it behind a palm, or resting on the ridge of a mountain like a copper ball. And when the fuller moon came up from the east, and I, forgetting the clearness of the sky, have been struck by the sudden dimness, and have looked up to watch her passing behind a cloud, it was delicious to see, instead of any cloud, the fronds of a palm waving upon her disk. One night, I saw an appearance perfectly new to me. No object was perceptible on the high black eastern bank, above and behind which hung the moon: but in her golden track on the dimpled waters were the shadows of palms, single and in clusters, passing over swiftly,—“authentic tidings of invisible things.” And then, there was the rising of Orion. I have said that the constellations were less conspicuous than at home, from the universal brilliancy of the sky: but Orion

shone forth, night by night, till the punctual and radiant apparition became almost oppressive to the watching sense. I came at last to know his first star as it rose clear out of the bank. He never issued whole from a haze on the horizon, as at home. As each star rose, it dropped a duplicate upon the surface of the still waters: and on a calm night, it was hard to say which Orion was the brightest.—And how different was the wind from our cloud-laden winds in England! Except that it carried us on, I did not like wind in Egypt. The palms, bowed from their graceful height, and bent all one way, are as ugly as trees can be: and the dust flies in clouds, looking like smoke or haze on land, and settling on our faces, even in the middle of the stream. Though called sand, it is, for the most part, mere dust from the limestone ranges, forming mud when moistened. The wind served, however, to show us a sand-pillar now and then, like a column of smoke moving slowly along the ground. On this second day of our voyage, when we were approaching Benisooeef, the wind made ugly what on a calm evening would have been lovely. A solitary house, in the midst of a slip of alluvial land, all blown upon with dust, looked to us the most dreary of dwellings. But the latteen sails on the river were a pretty feature,—one or two at a time, winding in and out, with the bends of the stream. We saw one before us near Benisooeef, this day. It proved to be our Scotch friends. Our boat beat his in a strong wind; and we swept past in good style,—the gentlemen uncapping and bowing; the ladies waving their handkerchiefs. I had no idea that the racing spirit had entered into

them, till one of the ladies told me, the next time we met, "We were so mortified when you passed us!"

Benisooeef is about eighty miles from Cairo: a good progress for twenty-three hours! It is the largest town in Upper Egypt: but it does not look very imposing from the river. Two or three minarets rise from it; and there is one rather good-looking house, which the Pasha inhabits when he comes. Its aspect was pretty as we looked back to it from the south.

The wind carried us on towards the rocky region where our careful Rais would retard our progress by night, though we had a glorious lamp in the moon, the whole night through. We had a rocky shore to the east this afternoon,—the Arabian mountains approaching the river: and in the early morning, we passed the precipitous cliffs, on whose flat summit stands the Coptic convent of "Our Lady Mary the Virgin." The forms of these limestone cliffs are most fantastic; and fantastic was the whole scene;—the long rows of cormorants in front of their holes,—a sort of burlesque upon the monks in their cells above; the unconnected flights of steps here and there on the rocks; the women and naked children on the ridge, giving notice to the begging monks of our approach; and the monks themselves, leaping and racing down the precipice, and then, two of them, racing through the water, struggling with the strong current, to board us for baksheesh. The one who succeeded was quite satisfied, in the midst of his panting and exhaustion, with five paras* and an empty bottle. He waited a little, till we had gone

* Five paras are a farthing and one-fifth.

about a mile, in order to have the help of the current, and then swam off to his convent.

We passed the pretty town of Minyeh about noon; and then entered upon sugar districts so rich as to make one speculate whether this might not be, some day, one of the great sugar-producing regions of the world. The soil is very rich, and irrigated by perpetually recurring shadoofs: and the crops of canes on the flats between the rocks and the river were very fine, and extending onwards for some days from this time. The tall chimnies of the Rauda sugar manufactory stood up above the wood on a promontory, looking very strange amidst such a scene.—On our return, we visited the sugar manufactory at Hou, and learned something of the condition and prospects of the manufacture. The Hou establishment belongs to Ibraheem Pasha, whom we met there at seven in the morning. It is quite new; and a crowd of little children were employed in the unfinished part, carrying mortar in earthen bowls for 1*d.* per day. The engineers are French, and the engine, one hundred-and-twenty horse power, was made at Paris. The managers cannot have here the charcoal they use in France for clarifying the juice. From the scarcity of wood, charcoal is too dear; and burnt bones are employed instead,—answering the purpose very well. We saw the whole process, which seemed cleverly managed; and the gentlemen pronounced the quality of the sugar good. An Englishman employed there said, however, that the canes were inferior to those of the West Indies, for want of rain. There were a hundred people at work in this establishment; their wages being, besides food, a piastre and a

quarter (nearly 3*d.*) per day. If, however, the payment of wages is managed here as I shall have to show it is usually done in Egypt, the receipts of the work-people must be considered much less than this. We heard so much of the complaints of the people at having to buy, under compulsion, coarse and dear sugar, that it is clear that much improvement in management must take place before Egypt can compete with other sugar-producing countries: but still, what we saw of the extensive growth of the cane, and the quality of the produce, under great disadvantages, made us look upon this as one of the great future industrial resources of Egypt.

The next morning, we could still distinguish the tall chimney of Rauda. We had been at anchor under a bank all night, the Rais being in fear of a rock a-head. The minarets of Melawee were on a flat on the western bank, some way before us: and between us and them, lay the caves of Bence Hasan;—those wonderful repositories of monumental records of the old Egyptians, which we were to explore on our return, but must now pass by, as if they were no more than what they looked, —mere apertures in the face of the mountains.

The crew were tracking this morning, for the first time;—stepping along at a funeral pace, and slipping off, one by one, to light a pipe where four or five smokers were puffing in a circle, among the sugar-canes. Our crew never appeared tired with their tracking; but in the mornings they were slow; and the man who was sent for milk moved very lazily,—whether the one chosen were the briskest or the quietest of the company. The cook was rather too deliberate about breakfast,

and Alee himself was not a good riser. It was their winter; and cold makes the Arabs torpid instead of brisk. Presently, we had to cross to the more level bank; and then we first saw our people row. It was very ridiculous. They sang at the top of their voices, some of them throwing their heads back, shutting their eyes, and shaking their heads at every quaver, most pathetically,—dipping their oars the while as if they were skimming milk, and all out of time with their singing, and with one another, while their musical time was perfectly good.—The wind presently freshened, and we stood away. It was fitful all day, but blew steadily when the moon rose. Just then, however, the Rais took fright about passing the next point at night, and we moored, beside four other boats, in the deep shadow of a palm-grove. On these occasions, two men of the neighbourhood and a dog are appointed to guard each boat that moors to the bank. The boat pays three piastres;* and if any thing is lost, complaint is made to the Governor of the district, whose business it is to recover the property, and punish the guards.

As we approached Manfaloot, we could perceive how strangely old Nile has gone out of his course, as if for the purpose of destroying the town. The bed of the river was once evidently at the base of the hills,—those orange hills with their blue shadows,—where rows of black holes show ancient catacombs. So strong a reflected light shone into one of these caves, that we could see something of its interior. We called it a perfect smuggler's cave, with packages of goods within,

* About 7*d*.

and a dog on guard at the entrance. When we looked at it with the glass, however, we were grave in a moment. We saw that the back and roof were sculptured.

Manfaloot is still a large place, sadly washed down,—sliced away—by the encroachment of the river. Many houses were carried away last year; and some which looked as if cut straight through their interior, have probably followed by this time.

The heat was now great in the middle of the day; and the glare oppressive to people who were on the look-out for crocodiles;—as we were after passing Manfaloot. We were glad of awning, goggles, fans, and oranges. But the crew were all alive,—kicking dust over one another on shore, leaping high in the water, to make a splash, and perpetrating all manner of practical jokes. We do not agree with travellers who declare it necessary to treat these people with coldness and severity,—to repel and beat them. We treated them as children; and this answered perfectly well. I do not remember that any one of them was ever punished on our account: certainly never by our desire. They were always manageable by kindness and mirth. They served us with heartiness, and did us no injury whatever. The only point we could not carry was inducing them to sing softly. No threats of refusing baksheesh availed. Mr. E. obtained some success on a single occasion by chucking dry bread into the throats of one or two who were quavering with shut eyes, and wide-open jaws. This joke availed for the moment, more than any threats: but the truth is, they can no more refrain from the full use of their lungs when at work than from that of eyes and ears.

On the evening of Monday the 7th, we approached Asyoot: and beautiful was the approach. After arriving in bright sunshine, apparently at its very skirts, and counting its fourteen minarets, and admiring its position at the foot of what seemed the last hill of the range, we were carried far away by a bend of the river;—saw boats, and groups of people and cattle, and noble palm and acacia woods on the opposite bank, and did not anchor till starlight under El Hamra, the village which is the port of Asyoot.

We were sorry to lose the advantage of the fair wind which had sprung up: but it was here that the crew had to bake their bread for the remainder of the voyage up. We had no reason to regret our detention, occasioning as it did our first real view of the interior of the country.—Asyoot is a post town too; and we were glad of this last certain opportunity of writing home before going quite into the wilds.

CHAPTER IV.

ASYOOT.—OLD SITES.—SOME ELEMENTS OF EGYPTIAN
THOUGHT.—FIRST CROCODILES.—SOOHADJ.—GIRGEH.
—KENNEH.

IN the morning, our canvas was down, along the landward side of our boats ; so that the people on shore could not pry. It was pleasant, however, to play the spy upon them. There were many donkeys, and gay groups of their owners, just above the boat. On the one hand, were a company of men washing clothes in the river under a picturesque old wall : and on the other, boat-builders diligently at work on the shore. The Arab artisans appear to work well. The hammers of these boat-builders were going all day ; and the tinman, shoemakers, and others whom I observed in the bazaars, appeared dexterous and industrious.

Asyoot is the residence of the Governor of Upper Egypt. Selim Pasha held this office as we went up the river. While we were coming down, he was deposed ;—to the great regret of all whom we heard speak of it. He was so well thought of that there was every hope of his reinstatement. Selim Pasha is he who married his sister, and made the terrible discovery while at supper on his wedding-day, in his first

interview with his bride. Both were Circassian slaves ; and he had been carried away before the birth of this sister. This adventure happened when the now grey-bearded man was young : but it invests him with interest still, in addition to that inspired by his high character. We passed his garden to-day, and thought it looked well,—the palace being embosomed among palms, acacias, and the yellow-flowering mimosa ; which last, when intermixed with other trees, gives a kind of autumnal tinge to masses of dark foliage.

We were much struck by the causeway, which would be considered a vast work in England. It extends from the river bank to the town, and thence on to the Djebel (mountain) with many limbs from this main trunk. In direct extent, I think it can hardly be less than two miles : but of this I am not sure. Its secondary object is to retain the Nile water after the inundation,—the water flowing in through sluices which can be easily closed. The land is divided by smaller embankments, within this large one, into compartments or basins, where the most vigorous crops of wheat, clover, and millet were flourishing when we rode by. The water stands not more than two feet deep at high Nile in the most elevated of these basins. Inside the causeway was the canal which yielded its earth to its neighbour. In this canal many pools remained ; and the seed was only just springing in the driest parts. In some places I saw shaken piers, and sluices where the unbaked brick seemed to have melted down in the water : but the new walls and bridges appeared to be solidly constructed.—On the banks of the causeway and canal on the south side of the town

were flowering mimosas as large, we thought, as oaks of fifty years growth in England. The causeway afforded an admirable road;—high, broad and level. The effect was strange of entering from such a road into such a town.

The streets had, for the most part, blank walls, brown, and rarely perpendicular. Some sloped purposely, and some from the giving way of the mud bricks. Many were cracked from top to bottom. Jars were built in near the top of several of the houses, for the pigeons. The bazaars appeared well stocked, and the business going forward was brisk. I now began to feel the misery which every Frank woman has to endure in the provincial towns of the East,—the being stared at by all eyes. The staring was not rude or offensive; but it was enough to be very disagreeable; at least, to one who knew, as I did, that the appearance of a woman with an uncovered face is an indecency in the eyes of the inhabitants. At Cairo, Jerusalem and Damascus, one feels nothing of this, and the staring is no more than we give to a Turk in the streets of London or Liverpool: but in the provincial towns there is an air of amazement in the people, mingled in some places with true Mohammedan hatred of the Christians, which it is hard to meet with composure. The gentlemen of my party, who did not care for their share as Christians, wondered at my uneasiness, and disapproved of it: but I could not help it: and though I never gave way to it so far as to omit seeing any thing on account of it, I never got over it at all, and felt it throughout to be the greatest penalty of my Eastern travel. Yet I would not advise

any Englishwoman to alter her dress or ways. She can never, in a mere passage through an Eastern country, make herself look like an Eastern woman; and an unsupported assumption of any native custom will obtain for her no respect, but only make her appear ashamed of her own origin and ways. It is better to appear as she is, at any cost, than to attempt any degree of imposture.

While we were waiting in the street to have our letters addressed in Arabic to the care of our consul at Cairo, I was, for the first time, struck by the number of blind and one-eyed people among those who surrounded us. Several young boys were one-eyed. As every body knows, this is less owing to disease than to dread of the government.

It was strange to see, in the middle of a large town, vultures and other wild birds flying overhead. Among others, we saw an eagle, with a fish in its beak.—On our way to the caves in the Djebel, we met a funeral procession coming from the cemetery which lies between the town and the hills. The women were uttering a funeral howl worthy of Ireland.

Our donkeys took us up a very steep path, nearly to the first range of caves. When we turned to overlook the landscape, what a view was there! Mr. E., who has travelled much, said he had never seen so rich an expanse of country. I felt that I had seen something like it; but I could not, at the moment, remember where. It was certainly not in England: nor was it like the plains of Lombardy; nor yet the unfenced expanse of cultivation that one sees in Germany. At last, it struck me that the resemblance was to an

Illinois prairie. The rich green, spreading on either hand to the horizon, was prairie-like : but I never was, in Illinois, on a height which commanded one hundred miles of unbroken fertility, such as I now saw. And even in Illinois, in the finest season, there is never such an atmosphere as here gave positive brilliancy to every feature of the scenery. A perfect level of the most vivid green extended north and south, till it was lost, not in haze, but from the mere inability of the eye to take in more : and through this wound away, from end to end, the full blue river. To the east, facing us, was the varied line of the Arabian hills, of a soft lilac tint. Seventeen villages, overshadowed by dark palms, were set down beside the river, or some little way into the land ; and the plain was dotted with Arab husbandmen and their camels, here and there, as far as the eye could reach. Below us lay the town, with its brown, flat-roofed houses, relieved by the palms of its gardens, and two or three white cupolas, and fourteen minarets, of various heights and forms. Between it and us lay the causeway, enlivened by groups of Arabs, with their asses and camels, appearing and disappearing among the thickets of acacia which bordered it. Behind all lay the brilliant Djebel—with its glowing yellow lights and soft blue shadows. The whole scene looked to my eyes as gay as the rainbow, and as soft as the dawn. As I stood before the cave, I thought nothing could be more beautiful : but one section of it looked yet lovelier when seen through the lofty dark portal of an upper cave. But there is no conveying such an impression as that.

The caves are tombs ; some of them very ancient : so ancient, that Abraham might have seen them, if he had come so far up the country. One race of those old times remains ;—the wolves. They were sacred here (Asyoot being the Lycopolis of the Greek times ;) their mummies are in many pits of the Djebel ; and we saw the tracks of two in the dust of the caves.—The cave called Stabl d'Antar (Stable of the Architect) is lofty and large ;—about seventy-two feet by thirty-six. Its ceiling is covered with patterns which we should call Greek borders anywhere else : but this ceiling is older than Greek art. The colours were chiefly blue, light grey and white. The colours of the hieroglyphic sculptures were red and blue,—the blue predominating. Two large figures flanked the portal ; one much defaced ; the other nearly perfect.

I have since seen so much of the old Egyptian monuments, and they have become so familiarly interesting to me, that I look back with amusement to this hour of my first introduction to hieroglyphics and burial caves. I can scarcely believe it was only a few months ago,—so youthful and ignorant seem now the feelings of mere curiosity and wonder with which I looked upon such painting and sculpture as afterwards became an intelligible language to me. I do not mean by this that I made any attempts to learn the old Egyptian language or its signs,—beyond a few of the commonest symbols. It is a kind of learning which requires the devotion of years ; and it is perhaps the only kind of learning of which a smattering can be of no use, and may probably be mischievous.—I remember being extremely surprised at the amount of

sculptured inscriptions here,—little imagining what a mere sprinkling they were compared with what I should see in other places.

In the succession of chambers within, and in the caves above, we found ranges of holes for the deposit of wolf mummies, and pits for the reception of coffins. The roofs of some of these caves had been supported by large square pillars, whose capitals remain attached, while the shafts are gone. This gave us a hint of the architectural adornment of which we were to see so much hereafter in the tombs of Thebes and Benec Hasan. In the corner of a tomb lay a human skull, the bone of which was remarkably thick. Many bones and rags of mummy cloth lay scattered about. On the side of the hill below, we found a leg and foot. The instep was high by compression, but very long. There was also a skull, wrapped in mummy-cloth; not fragrant enough now, for all its antique spicery, to bring away.

In the pits of these caves were the mummies lying when Cambyeses was busy at Thebes, overthrowing the Colossus in the plain. And long after, came the upstart Greeks, relating here their personal adventures in India under their great Alexander, and calling the place Lycopolis, and putting a wolf on the reverse of their local coins. And, long after, came the Romans, and called Lycopolis the ancient name of the place, and laid the ashes of their dead in some of the caves. And long after, came the Christian anchorites, and lived a hermit life in these rock abodes. Among them was John of Lycopolis, who was consulted as an oracle by the Emperor Theodosius, as by many others, from his

supposed knowledge of futurity. A favourite eunuch, Eutropius, was sent hither from Constantinople, to learn from the hermit what would be the event of the civil war. I once considered the times of the Emperor Theodosius old times. How modern do they appear on the hill-side at Asyoot !

Our Scotch friends came up in the evening. As they were detained for the same reason as ourselves, we left them behind when we started the next afternoon. They gave us bows and waving of handkerchiefs, when the shouts of our crew gave notice of our departure ; and they no doubt hoped to see us again speedily.

The next day, I told Mr. E. that a certain area we were coming to on the east bank must be the site of some old town. I judged this from the advantages evident at a glance. The space was nearly semicircular, —its chord being the river-bank, and the rest curiously surrounded by three ranges of hills, whose extremities overlapped each other. There was thus obtained a river frontage, shelter from the sands of the desert behind, and a free ventilation through the passages of the hills. We referred to our books and map, and found that here stood Antæopolis. From this time, it was one of my amusements to determine, by observation of the site, where to look for ancient towns ; and the requisites were so clear that I seldom found myself deceived.

Diodorus Siculus tells us that Antæ (supposed by Wilkinson to be probably the same with Ombte) had charge of the Ethiopian and Lybian parts of the kingdom of Osiris, while Osiris went abroad through the earth to benefit it with his gifts. Antæ seems not to

have been always in friendship with the house of Osiris, and was killed here by Hercules,* on behalf of Osiris: but he was worshipped here, near the spot where the wife and son of Osiris avenged his death on his murderer Typho. The temple sacred to Antæ, (or in the Greek, Antæus,) parts of which were standing thirty years ago, was a rather modern affair, having been built about the time of the destruction of the Colossus of Rhodes. Ptolemy Philopater built it; and he was the Egyptian monarch who sent presents and sympathy to Rhodes, on occasion of the fall of the Colossus. Now nothing remains of the monuments but some heaps of stones:—nothing whatever that can be seen from the river. The traveller can only look upon hamlets of modern Arabs, and speculate on the probability of vast “treasures hid in the sand.”

If I were to have the choice of a fairy gift, it should be like none of the many things I fixed upon in my childhood, in readiness for such an occasion. It should be for a great winnowing fan, such as would, without injury to human eyes and lungs, blow away the sand which buries the monuments of Egypt. What a scene would be laid open then! One statue and sarcophagus, brought from Memphis, was buried one hundred and thirty feet below the mound surface. Who knows but that the greater part of old Memphis, and of other glorious cities, lies almost unharmed under the sand! Who can say what armies of sphinxes, what sentinels of colossi, might start up on the banks of the river, or come forth from the hill sides of the interior,

* Quite a different personage from the Greek Hercules.

when the cloud of sand had been wafted away! The ruins which we now go to study might then appear occupying only eminences, while below might be ranges of pylons, miles of colonnade, temples intact, and gods and goddesses safe in their sanctuaries. What quays along the Nile, and the banks of forgotten canals! What terraces, and flights of wide shallow steps! What architectural stages might we not find for a thousand miles along the river, where now the orange sands lie so smooth and light as to show the track,—the clear foot print—of every beetle that comes out to bask in the sun!—But it is better as it is. If we could once blow away the sand, to discover the temples and palaces, we should next want to rend the rocks, to lay open the tombs: and heaven knows what this would set us wishing further. It is best as it is; for the time has not come for the full discovery of the treasures of Egypt. It is best as it is. The sand is a fine means of preservation; and the present inhabitants perpetuate enough of the names to serve for guidance when the day for exploration shall come. The minds of scholars are preparing for an intelligent interpretation of what a future age may find: and science, chemical and mechanical, will probably supply such means hereafter as we have not now, for treating and removing the sand when its conservative office has lasted long enough. We are not worthy yet of this great unveiling: and the inhabitants are not, from their ignorance, trustworthy as spectators. It is better that the world should wait, if only care be taken that the memory of no site now known be lost. True as I feel it to be that we had better wait, I was for ever catching myself in a

speculation, not only on the buried treasures of the mounds on shore, but on means for managing this obstinate sand.

And yet, vexatious as is its presence in many a daily scene, this sand has a bright side to its character,—like everything else. Besides its great office of preserving unharmed for a future age the records of the oldest times known to man, the sand of the desert has, for many thousand years, shared equally with the Nile the function of determining the character and the destiny of a whole people, who have again operated powerfully on the characters and destiny of other nations. Everywhere, the minds and fortunes of human races are mainly determined by the characteristics of the soil on which they are born and reared. In our own small island, there are, as it were, three tribes of people, whose lives are much determined still, in spite of all modern facilities for intercourse, by the circumstance of their being born and reared on the mineral strip to the west,—the pastoral strip in the middle,—or the eastern agricultural portion. The Welsh and Cornwall miners are as widely different from the Lincolnshire or Kentish husbandmen, and the Leicestershire herdsmen as Englishmen can be from Englishmen. Not only their physical training is different; their intellectual faculties are differently exercised, and their moral ideas and habits vary accordingly. So it is in every country where there is a diversity of geological formation: and nowhere is the original constitution of their earth so strikingly influential on the character of its inhabitants as in Egypt. There everything depends—life itself, and all that it includes—on the state of the uninter-

mitting conflict between the Nile and the Desert. The world has seen many struggles ; but no other so pertinacious, so perdurable, and so sublime as the conflict of these two great powers. The Nile, ever young because perpetually renewing its youth, appears to the inexperienced eye to have no chance, with its stripling force, against the great old Goliath, the Desert, whose might has never relaxed, from the earliest days till now ; but the giant has not conquered yet. Now and then he has prevailed for a season ; and the tremblers whose destiny hung on the event have cried out that all was over : but he has once more been driven back, and Nilus has risen up again, to do what we see him doing in the sculptures,—bind up his water-plants about the throne of Egypt. These fluctuations of superiority have produced extraordinary effects on the people for the time : but these are not the forming and training influences which I am thinking of now. It is true that when Nile gains too great an accession of strength, and runs in destructively upon the Desert, men are in despair at seeing their villages swept away, and that torrents come spouting out from the sacred tombs in the mountain, as the fearful clouds of the sky come down to aid the river of the valley. It is true that in the opposite case, they tremble when the heavens are alive with meteors, and the Nile is too weak to rise and meet the sand columns that come marching on, followed by blinding clouds of the enemy : and that famine is then inevitable, bringing with it the moral curses which attend upon hunger. It is true that at such times strangers have seen (as we know from Abdallatif, himself an eye-witness) how little children are made food

of,* and even men slaughtered for meat, like cattle. It is true that such have been the violent effects produced on men's conduct by extremity here;—effects much like what are produced by extremity everywhere. It is not of this that I am thinking when regarding the influence on a nation of the incessant struggle between the Nile and the Desert. It is of the formation of their ideas and habits, and the training of their desires.

From the beginning, the people of Egypt have had every thing to hope from the river; nothing from the desert: much to fear from the desert; and little from the river. What their Fear may reasonably be, any one may know who looks upon a hillocky expanse of sand, where the little jerboa burrows, and the hyæna prowls at night. Under these hillocks lie temples and palaces, and under the level sands, a whole city. The enemy has come in from behind, and stifled and buried it. What is the Hope of the people from the river, any one may witness who, at the regular season, sees the people grouped on the eminences, watching the advancing waters, and listening for the voice of the crier, or the boom of the cannon which is to tell the prospect or event of the inundation of the year. Who can estimate the effect on a nation's mind and character of a perpetual vigilance against the desert; (see what it is in Holland of a similar vigilance against the sea!) and of an annual mood of Hope in regard to the Nile? Who cannot see what a stimulating and enlivening influence this periodical anxiety and relief must exercise on the character of a nation?—And then, there is the effect on

* Abdallatif. Relation de l'Egypte. Livre II. ch. 2.

their Ideas. The Nile was naturally deified by the old inhabitants. It was a god to the mass; and at least one of the manifestations of deity to the priestly class. As it was the immediate cause of all they had, and all they hoped for,—the creative power regularly at work before their eyes, usually conquering, though occasionally checked, it was to them the Good Power; and the Desert was the Evil one. Hence came a main part of their faith, embodied in the allegory of the burial of Osiris in the sacred stream, whence he rose, once a year, to scatter blessings over the earth.—Then, the structure of their country originated or modified their ideas of death and life. As to the disposal of their dead;—they could not dream of consigning their dead to the waters, which were too sacred to receive any meaner body than the incorruptible one of Osiris: nor must any other be placed within reach of its waters, or in the way of the pure production of the valley. There were the boundary rocks, with the hints afforded by their caves. These became sacred to the dead. After the accumulation of a few generations of corpses, it became clear how much more extensive was the world of the dead than that of the living: and as the proportion of the living to the dead became, before men's eyes, smaller and smaller, the state of the dead became a subject of proportionate importance to them, till their faith and practice grew into what we see them in the records of the temples and tombs,—engrossed with the idea of death and in preparation for it. The unseen world became all in all to them; and the visible world and present life of little more importance than as the necessary introduction to the higher and greater. The

imagery before their eyes perpetually sustained these modes of thought. Everywhere they had in presence the symbols of the worlds of death and life ;—the limited scene of production, activity and change ;—the valley with its verdure, its floods, and its busy multitudes, who were all incessantly passing away, to be succeeded by their like ; while, as a boundary to this scene of life, lay the region of death, to their view unlimited, and everlastingly silent to the human ear.—Their imagery of death was wholly suggested by the scenery of their abode. Our reception of this is much injured by our having been familiarised with it first through the ignorant and vulgarised Greek adoption of it, in their imagery of Charon, Styx, Cerberus and Rhadamanthus : but if we can forget these, and look upon the older records with fresh eyes, it is inexpressibly interesting to contemplate the symbolical representations of death by the oldest of the Egyptians, before Greek or Persian was heard of in the world ; the passage of the dead across the river or lake of the valley, attended by the Conductor of souls, the god Anubis ; the formidable dog, the guardian of the mansion of Osiris, (or the divine abode ;) the balance in which the heart or deeds of the deceased are weighed against the symbol of Integrity ; the infant Harpocrates, —the emblem of a new life, seated before the throne of the judge ; the range of assessors who are to pronounce on the life of the being come up to judgment ; and finally the judge himself, whose suspended sceptre is to give the sign of acceptance or condemnation. Here the deceased has crossed the living valley and river ; and in the caves of the death region, where the howl of the wild dog is heard by night, is this process of judgment

going forward : and none but those who have seen the contrasts of the region with their own eyes,—none who have received the idea through the borrowed imagery of the Greeks, or the traditions of any other people,—can have any adequate notion how the mortuary ideas of the primitive Egyptians, and, through them, of the civilised world at large, have been originated by the everlasting conflict of the Nile and the Desert.

How the presence of these elements has, in all ages, determined the occupations and habits of the inhabitants, needs only to be pointed out ; the fishing, the navigation, and the almost amphibious habits of the people are what they owe to the Nile ; and their practice of laborious tillage, to the Desert. A more striking instance of patient industry can nowhere be found than in the method of irrigation practised in all times in this valley. After the subsidence of the Nile, every drop of water needed for tillage, and for all other purposes, for the rest of the year, is hauled up and distributed by human labour,—up to the point where the *sakia*, worked by oxen, supersedes the *shadoof*, worked by men. Truly the Desert is here a hard task-master : or rather, a pertinacious enemy, to be incessantly guarded against : but yet a friendly adversary, inasmuch as such natural compulsion to toil is favourable to a nation's character.

One other obligation which the Egyptians owe to the Desert struck me freshly and forcibly, from the beginning of our voyage to the end. It plainly originated their ideas of Art. Not those of the present inhabitants, which are wholly Saracenic still : but those of the primitive race who appear to have originated art all

over the world. The first thing that impressed me in the Nile scenery, above Cairo, was the angularity of almost all forms. The trees appeared almost the only exception. The line of the Arabian hills soon became so even as to give them the appearance of being supports of a vast table-land, while the sand heaped up at their bases was like a row of pyramids. Elsewhere, one's idea of sand-hills is that, of all round eminences, they are the roundest : but here their form is generally that of truncated pyramids. The entrances of the caverns are square. The masses of sand left by the Nile are square. The river banks are graduated by the action of the water, so that one may see a hundred natural Nilometers in as many miles. Then, again, the forms of the rocks, especially the limestone ranges, are remarkably grotesque. In a few days, I saw, without looking for them, so many colossal figures of men and animals springing from the natural rock, so many sphinxes and strange birds, that I was quite prepared for anything I afterwards met with in the temples. The higher we went up the country, the more pyramidal became the forms of even the mud houses of the modern people : and in Nubia, they were worthy, from their angularity, of old Egypt. It is possible that the people of Abyssinia might, in some obscure age, have derived their ideas of Art from Hindostan, and propagated them down the Nile. No one can now positively contradict it. But I did not feel on the spot that any derived art was likely to be in such perfect harmony with its surroundings as that of Egypt certainly is ;—a harmony so wonderful as to be perhaps the most striking circumstance of all to an European, coming from a country

where all Art is derived,* and its main beauty therefore lost. It is useless to speak of the beauty of Egyptian architecture and sculpture to those who, not going to Egypt, can form no conception of its main condition ; —its appropriateness. I need not add that I think it worse than useless to adopt Egyptian forms and decoration in countries where there is no Nile and no Desert, and where decorations are not, as in Egypt, fraught with meaning,—pictured language,—messages to the gazer. But I must speak more of this hereafter. Suffice it now that in the hills, angular at their summits, with angular mounds at their bases, and angular caves in their strata, we could not but at once see the originals of temples, pyramids and tombs. Indeed, the pyramids look like an eternal fixing down of the shifting sand-hills which are here a main feature of the desert. If we consider further what facility the desert has afforded for scientific observation,—how it was the field for the meteorological studies of the Egyptians, and how its permanent pyramidal forms served them, whether originally or by derivation, with instruments of measurement and calculation for astronomical purposes, we shall see that, one way or another, the Desert has been a great benefactor to the Egyptians of all time, however fairly regarded, in some senses, as an enemy. The sand may, as I said before, have a fair side to its character, if it

* Even the Gothic spire is believed by those who know best to be an attenuated obelisk ; as the obelisk is an attenuated pyramid. Our Gothic aisles are sometimes conjectured to be a symmetrical stone copy of the glades of a forest : but there are pillared aisles at El Karnac and Medeenet Haboo, which were constructed in a country which had no woods, and before the forests of northern Europe are discernible in the dim picture of ancient history.

has taken a leading part in determining the ideas, the feelings, the worship, the occupation, the habits, and the arts of the people of the Nile valley, for many thousand years.

The hills now, above Antæopolis, approached the river in strips, which, on arriving at them, we found to be united by a range at the back. Some fine sites for cities were thus afforded; and many of them were, no doubt, thus occupied in past ages.—A little further on rises a lofty rock,—a precipice three hundred feet high, which our Rais was afraid to pass at night. I was on deck before sunrise on the morning of the 11th, to see it: but I found there was no hurry. A man was sent for milk from this place; so I landed too, and walked some way along the bank. On the Lybian side, I overlooked a rich, green, clumpy country. On the Arabian side, the hills came down so close to the water as to leave only a narrow path, scarcely passable for camels at high Nile. There were goats among the rocks; and on the other shore, sheep, whose brown wool is spun by distaff, by men in the fields, or travelling along the bank. The unbleached wool makes the brown garments which all the men wear. I often wished that some one would set the fashion of red garments in the brown Nile scenery. We saw more or less good blue every day; but the only red dress I had seen yet was at Asyoot, where it looked so well that one wished for more. The red tarboosh is a treat to the eye, when the sun touches it,—or at night, the lamp on deck: but the crew did not wear the tarboosh,—only little white cotton caps, in the absence of the full-dress turban.

This day was remarkable for our seeing the first doum palm (an angular tree !) and the first crocodile. Alee said he had seen a crocodile two days before : but we had not. And now we saw several. The first was not distinguishable, to inexperienced eyes, from the inequalities of the sand. The next I dimly saw slip off into the water. In the afternoon, a family of crocodiles were seen basking on a mud bank which we were to pass. As we drew near, in silence, the whole boat's company being collected at the bows, the largest crocodile slipped into the water, showing its nose at intervals. Another followed, leaving behind the little one, a yellow monster, asleep, with the sunlight full upon it. Mr. E. fired at it, and at the same moment the crew set up a shout. Of course, it awoke, and was off in an instant, but unhurt. We had no ball ; and crocodile shooting is hopeless, with nothing better than shot. Our crew seemed to have no fear of these creatures, plunging and wading in the river without hesitation, whenever occasion required. There being no wind, we moored at sunset ; and two of us obtained half-an-hour's walk before dark. Even then, the jackals were howling after us the whole time. Our walk was over mud of various degrees of dryness, and among young wheat and little tamarisks, springing from the cracked soil.

On the 13th we fell in with Selim Pasha, without being aware what we were going to see. Our crew having to track, the Rais and Alee went ashore for charcoal, and Mr. E. and I for a walk. Following a path which wound through coarse grass and thorny mimosas, we found ourselves presently approaching

the town of Soohadj : and near the arched gate of the town, and everywhere under the palms, were groups and crowds of people, in clean turbans and best clothes. Then appeared, from behind the trees on the margin, three boats at anchor, one being that of Selim Pasha himself ; the others for his suite. He had come up the river to receive his dues, and was about to settle accounts now at Soohadj. He had a crew of twenty-three men, and was proceeding day and night. His interpreter accosted us, offered us service, discussed the wind and weather, and invited us to take coffee on board the Governor's boat. I was sorry to be in the way of Mr. E.'s going ; but I could not think of such an adventure, in Mrs. Y.'s absence. We saw the Governor leave his boat, supported by the arms, for dignity's sake. He then took his seat under a palm, and received some papers offered him. He looked old, short, and very business-like. A scribe sat on the top of his cabin, with inkhorn and other apparatus ; and a man was hurrying about on shore, with a handful of papers covered with Arabic writing. All this, with the turbaned and gazing groups under the tamarisks, the white-robed soldiers before the gate of the barracks ; the stretch of town-walls beside us, and the minarets of Eckmim rising out of the palm-groves on the opposite shore, made up a new and striking scene. Mr. and Mrs. Y. saw, from the boat, part of the reverse side : they saw eight men in irons, reserved to be bastinadoed for the non-payment of their taxes.—As we walked on, we passed a school, where the scholars were moving their bodies to and fro, and jabbering as usual. Then we descended the embankment of the canal which

winds in towards the town, and crossed its sluice : and then we came out upon a scene of millet-threshing. Two oxen, muzzled, were treading out the grain : five men were beating the ears, and a sixth was turning over and shaking the husks with a rake. Such are the groups which incessantly delight the eye in Eastern travel.—Next, we found ourselves among a vast quantity of heavy stones, squared for building. They were deeply embedded, but did not look like the remains of ancient building. And now it was time for us to stop, lest there should be difficulty, if we went further, in getting on board. So we sat down in a dusty but shady place, among some fowl-houses, and beside an oven. I never took a more amusingly foreign walk.—A short ramble that evening was as little like home ; but more sad than amusing. We entered a beautiful garden, or cultivated palm orchard, which was in course of rapid destruction by the Nile. Whole plots of soil, and a great piece of wall were washed away. Repeatedly we saw signs of this destruction ; and we wondered whether an equivalent advantage was given any where else. By day we passed towns which, like Manfaloot, were cut away, year by year ; and by night the sullen plash caused by the fall of masses of earth, was heard. In countries where security of property is more thought of than it is here, this liability must seriously affect the value of the best portions of the land ; those which have a river frontage. Here it appears to be quietly submitted to, as one of the decrees of inevitable fate. The circumstance of the Nile changing its course must also affect some historical and geographical questions :—in the one case as

regards the marches of ancient armies, and the sites of old cities; and in the other, the relations of different parts of the country. Many towns, called inland by geographers, are now on the banks of the river. At Manfaloot, it is clear that the divergence from the old course under the rocks is very great: and near Benee Hasan the change is made almost from year to year. When Sir G. Wilkinson visited the caves,* the river was so far off as to leave a breadth of two miles between it and the rocks: and Mrs. Romer, who was there the year before us, describes the passage to the caves as something laborious and terrific: whereas, when we visited the caves on our return, we found the river flowing at the base of the acclivity; and we reached the tombs easily in twelve minutes. From the heights, we traced its present and former course, and could plainly see a third bed, in which it had at one time run. We were sorry to see it cut through fine land, where the crops on either bank showed what the destruction must have been. The banks were falling in during the few hours of our stay; and here, as in similar places, we observed that the river was more turbid than usual. These local accidents must largely affect the great question of the rate of rising of the bed of the river, and, in consequence, that of the whole valley; a question which some have attempted to determine by a comparison of the dates of the buildings at Thebes with the depth of the sand accumulated above their bases.

The next place where we went ashore, Girgeh, once

* Wilkinson's Modern Egypt and Thebes. II. 45.

stood a quarter of a mile inland: it is now in course of being washed down. It is a miserable place, as might be expected, with such a fate hanging over it. We staid here an hour, for the purchase of bread, fowls, and a sheep. We give 30 paras ($1\frac{3}{4}d.$) for a fowl; 6s. for a sheep; and a piastre ($2\frac{1}{4}d.$) for 42 eggs. The small bazaars had few people in them at this hour, (7 A.M.), and of those few many were blind; and on our return to the boat, we found a row of blind people on the bank, hoping for baksheesh.—The millet stalks here measured eleven feet; and of course, the fields are a perfect jungle. We saw occasionally the millet stalks burnt, and strewn over the fields for a top-dressing. At other times we observed that where the millet had been cut, wheat was sown broadcast among the stubble, which was left to rot. The only manuring that we saw, besides this top-dressing, was that of the gardens with pigeons' dung; and the qualifying of the Nile mud with sand from the desert, or dust out of the temples, brought in frail-baskets on the backs of asses.

Two of our sapient crew having quarrelled at mess about which should have a particular morsel of bread, and fought noisily on shore, the Rais administered the bastinado. The first was laid down, and held by the feet and shoulders, while flogged with a boat-pole. He cried out vigorously. The other came forward cheerfully from the file, and laid himself down. The Rais broke the pole over him: but he made no noise, jumped up, spat the dust out of his mouth, and went to work at the tow-rope, as if nothing had happened. They seem to bear no malice, and joke with one another immediately after the bitterest quarrels.—One

of our Nubians wears his knife in a sheath, strapped about the upper part of his left arm. Another wears an amulet in the same manner. Two who come from Dongola have their faces curiously gashed with three cuts on each cheek, and four on each side the eye. These cuts are given them by their parents in childhood, for beauty-marks.

We now began to meet rafts of pottery coming down from Kenneh, the seat of the manufacture of the water jars which are in general use. Porous earth and burnt grass are the chief materials used. We meet seven or more rafts in a group. First, a layer of palm fronds is put on the raft; and then a layer of jars; then another layer of each. The jars all have their mouths out of the water. They are so porous that their conductors are continually employed in emptying them of water: that is, they are always so employed when we meet them. Not being worth sponges, they dip in and wring out cloths, with strings to them. The oars are mere branches, whose boughs are tied together at the extremity. Though they bend too much, they answer their purpose pretty well: but the whole affair looks rude and precarious enough.—In curious contrast with their progress was that of the steamer, conveying the Prince of Prussia, which we met to-day, hurrying down from Thebes. We preferred our method of voyaging, though we now advanced only about twelve miles a day, and had been fourteen days making the same distance that we did the first two.

We cannot understand why the country boats are so badly laden as they appear to be. The cargo is placed so forward as to sink the bows to the water; and so

many founder in consequence that we cannot conceive why the practice is not altered. We have seen several sunk. One was a merchant boat that had gone down in the night, with five people in her. She was a sad spectacle,—her masts and rigging appearing above water, in the middle of the stream.

On the morning of the 19th, on leaving our anchorage near the high rock of Chenoboscion, we found that a wind had sprung up; and we enjoyed the sensation of more rapid progress. We might now hope to see the temple of Dendara in a few hours. The Arabian mountains retreated, and the Lybian chain advanced. Crocodiles plunged into the water as we sailed past the mud banks. The doum palms began to congregate, and from clumps they became woods. Behind one of these dark woods, I saw a mass of building which immediately fixed my attention; and when a turn of the river brought us to a point where the sunlight was shining into it, I could clearly distinguish the characteristics of the temple of Dendara. I could see the massive portico;—the dark spaces between the pillars, and the line of the architrave. Thus much we could see for two hours from the opposite shore, as Mr. E. had to ride up to Kenneh for letters: but, as the wind was fair, and the temple was two miles off, we left till our return any closer examination of it.

While Mr. E. and Alee were gone to the town, Mr. Y. walked along the shore, in the direction of Selim Pasha's boats; and Mrs. Y. and I were busy about domestic business on board. I was sewing on deck when Mr. Y. returned, and told me he had been invited to an audience of Selim Pasha. When pipes and

coffee had been brought, conversation began, through the medium of some Italian gentlemen of the Pasha's suite. On Mr. Y.'s expressing his hope that, by means of commerce, a friendly feeling between the Egyptians and English would always subsist and increase, one of these officers exclaimed, "How should that be, when you have robbed us of Syria?" On Mr. Y.'s pacific observations being again received with an angry recurrence to this sore subject, the Pasha interposed, saying, "These are great and important affairs which are for our superiors to settle, and with which we subordinates have nothing to do. Let us talk of something pleasant." While Mr. Y. was telling me this, an elderly man, with a white beard, hideous teeth, and coarse face altogether, was approaching the boat: and to my dismay, he stepped on board,—or rather, was pushed in by his attendants. Mr. Y. had been sitting with his back to the shore; and now, taken by surprise, seeing the white beard, and having his head full of his late interview, he announced to me "his Excellency, Selim Pasha." Up I jumped, with my lap-full of work, even more disappointed that this should be the hero of that romantic story than dismayed at the visit. And he looked so unlike the old man I saw under the palm at Souhadj! I called up Mrs. Y. from the cabin. Mr. Y. made signs to the cook (for our only interpreter was absent) for pipes and coffee: and we sat down in form and order, and abundant awkwardness. To complete the absurdity of the scene, a line of towels, just out of the wash-tub, were drying on the top of the cabin; and the ironing blanket was on the cabin table.—The first relief was Mrs. Y.'s telling me, "It is not Selim Pasha.

These are the son and grandson of the English consul at Kenneh."

Then I began to remember certain things of the English consul at Kenneh;—what a discreet old Arab he is reported to be,—behaving tenderly to European ladies, and pressing parties to go and dine with him; and then, when they are on the way to the town, stepping back to the boat, and laying hands on all the nice provisions he can find, from eggs to Maraschino: so that he extracts a delectable dinner for himself out of his showy hospitality to strangers. While I was reviving all this in my memory, the old man himself was coming down to us. He shook hands with us all round; and, as I expected, kissed the hand of each lady, and pressed us to go up and dine with him. Alee, who had in the meantime returned with Mr. E., and seen from afar that we were holding a levée, had received his instructions to decline decisively all invitations, and convey that we were in a hurry, as the wind was fair for Thebes: so we were let off with a promise that we would dine with the Consul on our return, if we could.—But now arrived the Governor of Kenneh, a far superior-looking person, handsomely dressed in fine brown broadcloth. The Consul's elderly son took the opportunity of exploring the cabins, peeping into every corner, and examining Mr. E.'s glass and fowling-piece. We feared a long detention by visitors; but these departed before any others came; and it was still early in the afternoon when we spread our sail, and were off for Thebes.

CHAPTER V.

WALKS ASHORE.—FIRST SIGHT OF THEBES.—ADFOO.—
CHRISTMAS DAY.

THE next morning, (Sunday, December 20th) we found we must still have patience, as we should not see Thebes for another day. The wind had dropped at seven, the evening before, and had brought us only three miles this morning. In the course of the day we were made fully sensible of our happiness in having plenty of time, and in not being pressed to speed by any discomfort on board our boat. We were walking on shore at noon, among men and children busy about their tillage, and sheep and asses and shadoofs, when we saw two boats, bearing the British and American flags, floating down the stream. They wore round, and landed their respective parties, who were Cairo acquaintances of ours. Neither party had been beyond Thebes. How we pitied them when we thought of Philœ and the Cataracts, and the depths of Nubia, which we were on our way to see! The English gentlemen were pressed for time, and were paying their crew to work night and day; by which they did not appear to be gaining much. The American gentleman and his wife were suffering cruelly under the misery of vermin in their boat: a trouble which all travellers in Egypt must

endure in a greater or less degree, but which we found much less terrible than we had expected, and reducible to something very trifling by a little housewifely care and management.* The terms in which they spoke of Thebes, after even their hasty journey, warmed our hearts and raised our spirits high.

The next day was the shortest day. It was curious to observe how we had lately gained five minutes of sunlight by our progress southwards. Though we cared to-day for nothing but Thebes, we condescended to examine, in our early walk, a strange, dreary-looking place which we were informed was one of the Pasha's schools. It was a large square mud building, crumbling away in desolation. No children were there; but two officers stared at us out of a window. Another, armed to the teeth, entered the enclosure, and spoke to us, we suppose in Arabic, as he passed. The plots of ground were neglected, and the sheds losing their roofs. It is evident that all is over with this establishment, while the people of the district appear in good condition. There were shadoofs at small distances, and so many husbandmen at hand that they relieve each other every two hours at this laborious work, a crier making known along the bank the expiration of the time.—We walked through flourishing fields of tobacco and millet: and we gathered, for the first time, the beautiful yellow blossom of the cotton shrub. The castor-oil plant began here to be almost as beautiful as the cotton.

Whenever we went for a walk, we were most energetically warned against the dogs of the peasantry: and

* Appendix B.

one of the crew always sprang ashore with a club for our defence when we were seen running into the great danger of going where we might meet a dog. I suppose the danger is real,—so invariably did the peasants rush towards us, on the barking of a dog, to pelt the animal away. I never saw any harm done by a dog, however; and I never could remember to be on my guard; so that one or another of the crew had often to run after me at full speed, when I had forgotten the need of a club bearer, and gone alone.

From breakfast time this day, we were looking over southwestwards, to the Lybian hills which we knew contained the Tombs of the Kings: and before noon, we had seen what we can never forget. On our return we spent eight days at Thebes; eight days of industrious search, which make us feel familiar with the whole circuit of monuments. But the first impression remains unimpaired and undisturbed. I rather shrink from speaking of it; it is so absolutely incommunicable! The very air and sunshine of the moment, the time of day, the previous mood of mind, have so much share in such a first impression as this, that it can never come alike to any two people. I can but relate what the objects were; and that most meagrely.

The wind was now carrying us on swiftly; and as we, of course, stood as high as we could, on the roof of the cabin, the scene unfolded before us most favourably. Every ridge of hills appeared to turn, and every recess to open, to show us all sides of what we passed. To our left spread a wide level country,—the eastern expanse of the plain of Thebes,—backed by peaked mountains, quite unlike the massive Arabian rocks

which had hitherto formed that boundary. There was a thick wood on that bank; and behind that wood Aleé pointed out to us the heavy masses of the ruins of El Karnac. Vast and massy indeed they looked. But, as yet, the chief interest was on the western shore. The natural features were remarkable enough,—the vastness of the expanse, especially, which confounded all anticipation. The modern world obtruded itself before the ancient,—the shores dressed in the liveliest green, and busy with Arabs, camels and buffalo, partially intercepting the view behind. Between these vivid shores, and before and behind the verdant promontories, lay reach after reach of the soft grey, brimming river. Behind this brilliant foreground stretched immeasurable slopes of land, interrupted here and there by ranges of mounds or ridges of tawny rocks, and dotted over with fragments of ruins, and teeming with indications of more. In the rear was the noble guard of mountains which overlooks and protects the plain of Thebes: mountains now nearly colourless,—tawny as the expanse below; but their valleys and hollows revealed by the short, sharp shadows of noon. The old name for this scene was running in my head,—“the Lybian suburb:” and when I looked for the edifices of this suburb, what did I not see? I could see, even with the naked eye, and perfectly with the glass, traces of the mighty works which once made this, for greatness, the capital of the world. Long rows of square apertures indicated the ranges of burying places. Straggling remains of building wandered down the declivities of sand. And then the Rameséum was revealed, and I could distinguish its colossal statues.

And next appeared,—and my heart stood still at the sight,—the Pair. There they sat, together yet apart, in the midst of the plain, serene and vigilant,—still keeping their untired watch over the lapse of ages and the eclipse of Egypt. I can never believe that any thing else so majestic as this Pair has been conceived of by the imagination of Art. Nothing even in nature certainly ever affected me so unspeakably ;—no thunder storm in my childhood, nor any aspect of Niagara, or the great Lakes of America, or the Alps, or the Desert, in my later years. I saw them afterwards, daily, and many times a day, during our stay at Thebes : and the wonder and awe grew from visit to visit. Yet no impression exceeded the first ; and none was like it. Happy the traveller who sees them first from afar ; that is, who does not arrive at Thebes by night !

We had not thought of stopping at Thebes on our way up the river : but we were delighted to find that the Rais wanted to have his head shaved, and Aleé to buy a sheep and some bread. We drew to the El-Uksur (Luxor) shore, and ran up to the ruins. The most conspicuous portion from the river is the fourteen pillars which stand parallel with it, in a double row : but we went first to the great entrance to the temple. I find here in my journal the remark which occurs oftener than any other ; that no preconception can be formed of these places. I know that it is useless to repeat it here : for I meet everywhere at home people who think, as I did before I went, that between books, plates, and the stiff and peculiar character of Egyptian architecture and sculpture, Egyptian art may be almost as well known and conceived of in England as on the

spot. I can only testify, without hope of being believed, that it is not so; that instead of ugliness, I found beauty; instead of the grotesque, I found the solemn: and where I looked for rudeness, from the primitive character of Art, I found the sense of the soul more effectually reached than by works which are the result of centuries of experience and experiment. The mystery of this fact sets one thinking, laboriously; I may say, painfully. Egypt is not the country to go to for the recreation of travel. It is too suggestive and too confounding to be met but in the spirit of study. One's powers of observation sink under the perpetual exercise of thought: and the lightest-hearted voyager, who sets forth from Cairo eager for new scenes and days of frolic, comes back an antique, a citizen of the world of six thousand years ago, kindred with the mummy. Nothing but large knowledge and sound habits of thought can save him from returning perplexed and borne down;—unless indeed it be ignorance and levity. A man who goes to shoot crocodiles and flog Arabs, and eat ostrich's eggs, looks upon the monuments as so many strange old stone-heaps, and comes back "bored to death with the Nile;" as we were told we should be. He turns back from Thebes, or from the First Cataract;—perhaps without having even seen the Cataract, when within a mile of it, as in a case I know; and he pays his crew to work night and day, to get back to Cairo as fast as possible. He may return gay and unworn: and so may the true philosopher, to whom no tidings of Man in any age come amiss; who has no prejudices to be painfully weaned from, and an imagination too strong to be

overwhelmed by mystery, and the rush of a host of new ideas. But for all between these two extremes of levity and wisdom, a Nile voyage is as serious a labour as the mind and spirits can be involved in; a trial even to health and temper such as is little dreamed of on leaving home. The labour and care are well bestowed, however, for the thoughtful traveller can hardly fail of returning from Egypt a wiser, and therefore a better man.

There is something very interesting in meeting with a fellow-feeling in ancient travellers so strong as may be found in the following passage from Abdallatif with that of some modern Egyptian voyagers. The passage is almost the same as some entries in my journal, made when I had never heard of the Bagdad physician. He speaks of Memphis, as seen in his day, and as, alas! one fears it will be seen no more. "Notwithstanding the immense extent of this city, and its high antiquity: notwithstanding all the vicissitudes of the different governments under which it has passed: notwithstanding the efforts that various nations have made to destroy it in obliterating the minutest traces, effacing its smallest remains, carrying off the materials, even to the very stones, of which it was constructed; laying waste its edifices, mutilating the figures which adorned them; and notwithstanding all that four thousand years and more have been able to add to such causes of destruction, these ruins yet offer to the eye of the spectator such a combination of wonders as confounds his understanding, and as the most eloquent man would vainly attempt to describe. The longer he contemplates, the more admiration he feels: and each

returning glance at these ruins causes new extacy. Scarcely has the spectacle suggested one idea to the mind of the spectator, when it overpowers it by a greater; and when he thinks he has obtained a perfect knowledge of what is before him, he presently learns that his conceptions are still far below the truth.”* A yet older traveller, Herodotus, says the same thing more briefly: “I shall enlarge upon what concerns Egypt, because it contains more wonders than any other country; and because there is no other country where we may see so many works which are admirable, and beyond all expression.”†

It is not the vastness of the buildings which strikes one first at El-Uksur,—vast as they are; it is the marvel of the sculptures with which they are covered;—so old, so spirited, and so multitudinous. It is Homer, alive before one’s eyes. And what a thought it is, to one standing here, how long this very sculpture has been an image and a thought to great minds placed one far behind another in the stages of human history! Herodotus, who here seems a modern brother-traveller, stood on this spot, and remembered the Iliad as we were now remembering it. He spoke of Homer, his predecessor by four hundred years, as we speak of those who lived in the crusading times. And Homer told of wars which were the same old romance to the people of his time as the Crusades are to us. And at the time of these wars, this Thebes was a city of a thousand years; and these battle-pictures now before our eyes were antiquities, as our cathedrals are to us.

* Relation de l’Egypt. Livre I. ch. 4.

† Herod. II. 35.

Here we were standing before one of the "hundred gates" through which Homer says the Theban warriors passed in and out; and on the flanks of this gateway were sculptured the achievements of the ancestors of these warriors. There are the men and horses and chariots, as if in full career,—as full of life as if painted, and painted in a modern time! The stones of the edifice are parting in many places; and these battle-figures extend over the cracks, almost uninjured by the decay. These graven epics will last some time longer, though the stone records will give way before the paper.

The guardian colossi are mighty creatures, with their massive shoulders and serene heads rising out of the ground. A third helmet is visible; and among the Arab huts near, a fourth. We saw here for the first time columns with the lotus-shaped capitals; the capitals being painted, and the blossoms, buds and leaves which filled up the outline being very distinct. One test of the massive character of the work was curious. A huge block of the architrave has fallen from its place, and rests on the rim of the cup of the lotus, without breaking it. We were now introduced to some of the details of Egyptian architecture, and to some of its great separate features: but all unity of impression was obviated by the intrusion of the mud huts which are plastered up against the ruins throughout their range. When we came down the river, and had become familiar with the structure of Egyptian temples, we could make out the plan of this, and somewhat discharge from view the blemishes which spoiled every thing now. But at present, we

were not qualified, and we carried away a painful impression of confusion as well as ruin.

As we sailed away, I obtained another view of the Pair; and I watched them till I could hardly tell whether it was distance or the dusk which hid them at last.

The wind carried us on well: too well; for a stay of the foremast gave way; and this hindered our progress. The calm and pathetic-looking Rais rushed towards us, vociferated, and pulled Mr. E. by the wrist to the forepart, to see the crack,—of which Mr. E., with all his experience in such matters, thought little. The Rais, however, is responsible for the condition of the boat, and he feared that the owner would “cut his neck off” if any thing was carried away. So we moored to the bank, and some little nails were driven in, so as to do no good whatever; and then it came out that the Rais wanted to stop here for the night. We so protested against this that he appeared to yield; but at the end of a mile or so, he drove us decisively into the eastern bank.

As I was walking the deck before tea, I saw two lights moving up under the opposite bank; and supposed them to be from Selim Pasha's boats. They crossed the stream, however; and the boats they belonged to drove into the bank so immediately behind us as to lift our rigging. It was our Scotch friends, and the American party. The gentlemen immediately exchanged visits; and our own party brought us some amusement when they returned. Mr. E.'s first exclamation, as he threw down his hat, was “What a lucky

fellow that is! He has shot a crocodile." "And why not, if he carries ball?" "Ah! I should have brought ball. He has done it very cleverly, though." And when the Scotchman returned the call after tea, we found that he had indeed done a difficult and hazardous feat very well: and he was in possession of the stuffed hide as a trophy.

The next morning, we had an amusement which seemed ridiculous enough in the Thebaid, but certainly rather exciting;—a boat race. When I came on deck, the Scotch gentlemen were just mounting the bank, with their fowling pieces; and their crew and ours were preparing to track. I was about to go ashore also for a walk, when I observed that our Rais was getting out the sail, though there was not a breath of wind. It was clear that he expected to fall in with a wind at the next reach of the river: so I remained on board. Our sail caught the eye of our Scotch friends. I saw the halt of their red tarbooshes over the bushes that fringed the bank. They scampered back, and leaped on board their boat; and in another moment, up went their sail. In another, up went the American's! Three sails, no wind, and three crews tracking, at a pace scarcely less funereal than usual!—At the expected point, the sails filled, all at the same instant, and off we went. For an hour or more, I could not believe that we were gaining ground, though Mr. E. declared we were. When it was becoming clear that we were, he told that, provoking as it was, we must take in sail and yield the race, as we had to take up, in yonder bay, our milk messenger. There he was, accordingly; and quick was the manœuvre of putting

in, and snatching up the poor fellow. Half a dozen hands hauled him in, and helped to spill the milk. Then, what a shout of laughter there was when the Scotchman shortened sail, and took up his milkman too: and after him, the Americans! We could relish the milk now, which we had thought so much in our way before. The race was fairly decided before ten o'clock. We beat, as we ought, from the superiority of our boat: and before noon, our Scotch friends put into Isna (Esneh) where their crew were to bake their bread. This was the last place north of the Cataract, where they could do so.

Isna looks well from the river; but we could see nothing of the temple, which is lost to view in the town. We left it for our return: and we meant to do the same with that of Adfoo (Edfou). But it came in sight while we were at dinner the next day, just when there was no wind. We decided that no time would be lost by a run up to the temple: so we sprang ashore, among cotton and castor-oil plants, and walked a mile in dust, through fields and under rows of palms, and among Arab dwellings, to the front of the mighty edifice. No one of the temples of Egypt struck me more with the conviction that these buildings were constructed as fortifications, as much as for purposes of religious celebration. I will not here give any detailed account of this temple; partly because I understood these matters better when I afterwards saw it again: and yet more, because it was now almost buried in dust, much of which was in course of removal on our return, for manuring the land.—It was here, and now, that I was first taken by

surprise with the *beauty*;—the beauty of every thing;—the sculptured columns, with their capitals, all of the same proportion and outline, though exhibiting in the same group the lotus, the date palm, the doum palm and the tobacco:—the decorations,—each one, with its fulness of meaning,—a delicately sculptured message to all generations, through all time:—and, above all, the faces. I had fancied the faces, even the portraits, grotesque: but the type of the old Egyptian face has great beauty, though a beauty little resembling that which later ages have chosen for their type. It resembles, however, some actual modern faces. In the sweet girlish countenances of Isis and Athor, I often observed a likeness to persons,—and especially one very pretty one,—at home.

The other thing that surprised me most was the profusion of the sculptured inscriptions. I had often read of the whole of the surfaces of these temples being covered with inscriptions: but the fact was never fairly in my mind till now: and the spectacle was as amazing as if I had never heard of it. The amount of labour invested here seems to shame all other human industry. It reminds one more of the labours of the coral insect than of those of men.

After taking a look at the scanty remains of the smaller temple, we returned to the boat, to set foot on land no more, we hoped, till we reached the boundary of Egypt, at the old Syene. My friends at home had promised to drink our healths at the First Cataract on Christmas day: and, when the wind sprang up, on our leaving Adfoo, and we found, on the morning of the 24th, that it had carried us twenty-five

miles in the night, we began to believe we should really keep our appointment.

The quarries of Silsilis have a curious aspect from the river;—half way between rocks and buildings: for the stones were quarried out so regularly as to leave buttresses which resemble pillars or colossal statues. Here, where men once swarmed, working that machinery whose secret is lost, and moving those masses of stone which modern men can only gaze at,—in this once busy place, there is now only the hyæna and its prey. In the bright daylight, when the wild beast is hidden in its lair, all is as still as when we passed.

We saw this morning a man crossing the river, here very wide, on a bundle of millet stalks. His clothes were on his head, like a huge turban, and he paddled himself over with the branch of a tree.

At sunset, the contrasting colours of the limestone and sandstone ranges were striking. The limestone was of a bright pale yellow: the sandstone purplish. By moonlight, we saw the ruins of Kóm Umboo (Kom Ombos), which looked fine on the summit of their rock on the eastern bank.

Christmas morning was like a July morning in England. We had made good progress during the night, and were now only eleven miles from Aswán (Essouan), the old Syene,—the frontier between Egypt and Nubia. When we came within two miles, we left our letter-writing. The excitement was too strong to allow of any employment. At present, we saw nothing of the wildness of the scenery, of which we had read so much. We found that higher up. The river became

more and more lake-like ; and there was a new feature in the jutting black rocks. The shores were green and tranquil ; and palms abounded more than in any place we had passed. Behind these rich woods, however, the Lybian desert rose, yellow with sand drifts.—Our crew became merry in the near prospect of rest. One of them dressed himself very fine, swathing himself with turbans, and began to dance, to the music and clapping of the rest. He danced up to us, with insinuating cries of “baa” and “baksheesh,” as a hint for a present of a sheep. In the midst of this, we ran aground, and the brisk fellows threw down their drum, pipe, and finery, and went to work as usual.—We were now making for the shore, in order to land a man who had begged a passage from Cairo. He was a Rais ; and had served at Constantinople and elsewhere for twenty-five years, during which time he had never been home. For many years he had had no tidings of wife or children ; and now, when within a mile or two of his home, he showed no signs of perturbation. He made his acknowledgments to us with an easy cheerful grace, put off his bright red slippers, and descended into the mud, and then thrust his muddy feet into his new slippers with an air of entire tranquillity. We watched him as long as we could see him among the palms, and should have been glad to know how he found all at home.—The scene around looked far indeed out of the bounds of Christendom, this Christmas-day, till I saw, on a steep, the ruins of the Coptic convent of St. George. Aswán was now peeping over the palms on the eastern shore ; and opposite to it was the island of Elephantine,—half rubbish, half verdure. We moored to the shore below

Aswán just at two o'clock; and thus we kept our appointment, to dine at the First Cataract on Christmas Day. Our dinner included turkey and plum-pudding. Our Arab cook succeeded well with the last-mentioned novelty. We sent a huge cantle of it to the Rais, who ate it all in a trice, and gave it his emphatic approbation.

CHAPTER VI.

ASWÁN.—SLAVES.—FIRST RIDE IN THE DESERT.—
 QUARRIES.—ELEPHANTINE.—RIVER SCENERY.—PRE-
 PARATIONS FOR NUBIA.—FIRST SIGHT OF PHILÆ.

As soon as our plank was down, a sort of mob-market was formed on shore. There was a display of a stuffed crocodile, spears, ebony clubs, straw-baskets, coins, walking sticks, an ostrich's egg, a conjuror, &c. It was at this place that a girl offered me for sale an English halfpenny; and another the glass stopper of a little bottle. Here, as everywhere, my ear trumpet was handled and examined with quick curiosity: and in almost every case, from Nubia to the Lebanon, the immediate conclusion was the same. The inquirers put the small end to their lips, and gave a satisfied nod. It was clearly a pipe, with an enormous bowl! At Aswán, however, we staid long enough for the people to discover what the trumpet was for; and from the moment of the discovery, they did their best to enable me to do without it. As we passed through the lane they made for us, they pressed forwards to shout into my ears "baksheesh! baksheesh," till Aleé pushed and flogged them away. I wonder at their perseverance in thus incessantly begging of strangers; for we could not learn that they ever got any thing by it. If, as it

appeared to me, travellers give only in return for service, or in consideration of some infirmity, the perseverance in begging seems wonderful. I saw at this place parents teaching a little one to speak : and the word they tried them with was "baksheesh." I saw a little fellow just able to carry his father's slippers,—which were almost as big as himself:—his father gave him a careful training in hugging the slippers with one arm, while he held out the other hand to me for baksheesh. —The people here were very good-looking. They cannot grow provisions enough for their numbers,—the desert encroaching too much to permit the cultivation of more land than the mere river banks : but they import enough for their wants. Their renowned dates are their principal article of exchange ; and traffic goes on here in hennah, baskets, senna, charcoal and slaves from Upper Ethiopia and Abyssinia. Of course, it was impossible to learn their numbers. Nobody knows ; and if any one knew, he would not tell. A census may be, and has been, ordered ; but it cannot be executed. The popular dread of the Government renders it impossible. The fellahs (peasants) have such a terror of increased taxation and of the conscription, that they abscond on the mention of a census : and some who can afford it bribe the officials to suppress their names, and those of their families. The last thing that can be learned of any Egyptian town or district is its population.

The walls of the streets are blank here;—not a window, or break of any kind, but a low door here and there. The bazaars looked poor ; and I believe the traffic is chiefly carried on elsewhere. We saw two slave-bazaars. One was an enclosure on the rising

ground above our boat. The slaves here were only five or six, and all children ;—all under sixteen years of age. They were intelligent and cheerful-looking ; and I recognised, at the first glance, the likeness to the old Egyptian countenance and costume. The girls had their faces uncovered ; and their hair in the Ethiopian fashion,—precisely that which we see in the old sculptures and paintings. One little girl was preparing the pottage for their supper, very cleverly and earnestly. She was said to be fifteen ; and 15*l*. was the sum asked for her.—The other bazaar was on the outskirts of the town, and near our boat. It contained, when we saw it on our return, a dozen boys, and about fifteen girls. Most of the girls were grinding millet between two stones, or kneading and baking cakes. They were freshly oiled, in good plight ; and very intelligent-looking, for the most part. Some of them were really pretty in their way,—in the old Egyptian way. They appeared cheerful, and at home in their business ; and there can scarcely be a stronger contrast than between this slave-market and those I had seen in the United States. The contrast is as strong as between the serfdom of the Egyptian, and the freedom of the American inhabitants of the respective countries : and of course, the first aspect of Slavery is infinitely less repulsive in Egypt than in America. What I learned, and may have to tell, of the life of the modern Egyptians proves, however, that the institution is no more defensible here than elsewhere.

I saw a little girl on the shore making cord, for tying round the waists of the men ; and was extremely surprised to observe that the process is the same as

that of bobbinmaking with the lyre by English ladies. Instead of an ivory lyre, this child had two crossed sticks; and her cotton thread was very coarse. It was striking to see this little art existing in places so widely apart.

We walked, this afternoon, to the ruins of the old town, and overlooked its desolation from the top of the rock above the river. The translation of the name of this town is "the Opening:" and a great opening this once was, before the Nile had changed its character in Ethiopia, and when the more ancient races made this rock their watch-tower on the frontier between Egypt and the South.

That the Nile has changed its character, south of the First Cataract, has been made clear by some recent examination of the shores and monuments of Nubia. Dr. Lepsius has discovered watermarks so high on the rocks, and edifices so placed as to compel the conviction that the bed of the Nile has sunk extraordinarily, by some great natural process, either of convulsion or wear.* The apparent exaggerations of some old writers about the Cataracts at Syene may thus be in some measure accounted for. If there really was once a cataract here, instead of the rapids of the present day, there is some excuse for the reports given from hearsay, by Cicero and Seneca. Cicero says that "the river throws itself headlong from the loftiest mountains, so that those who live nearest are deprived of the sense of hearing, from the greatness of the noise." Seneca's account is,—“When some people were stationed there

* Appendix C.

by the Persians, their ears were so stunned with the constant roar, that it was found necessary to remove them to a more quiet place."—Supposing the Cataract formerly to have been of any height rendered necessary by the discoveries of Dr. Lepsius, it is clear that Syene must have been the station for the transshipment of merchandise passing north or south. The granite quarries, too, whence much of the building material of old Egypt was drawn, must have added to the business of the place. It is clear, accordingly, that this was, in all former times, a station of great importance. There were temples at Elephantine, to guard the interests of the neighbourhood, and to attract and gratify strangers. There was a Nilometer, to give tidings of the deposits of the great god Nilus. There was a garrison in the time of the Persians, and again in that of the Greeks: and Roman fortifications stand in ruin on the heights around. The Saracenic remains are obvious enough: and thus we have, on this frontier spot, and visible from the rock on which we stood, evidence of this place having been prized by successive races as the Opening which its present name declares it to be.

The ruins of the Saracenic town make their site desolate beyond description:—more desolate to my eyes, if possible, than the five acres I saw laid waste by the great New York fire. Two women were sitting under the wall of a roofless house, with no neighbours but a few prowling dogs. They warned me away till they saw the rest of my party coming up the ascent.—The island of Elephantine, opposite, looked as if just laid waste by an earthquake, scarcely one stone being left upon another of all its once grand edifices. On its



rocks were hieroglyphic inscriptions, many and deeply carved.—In a hollow of the desert behind us lay the great cemetery, where almost every grave has its little stone, with a Cufic inscription. The red granite was cropping up everywhere; and promontories and islets of black basalt began to show themselves in the river. Behind us, at the entrance of the desert, were the mountainous masses of granite where we were to-morrow to look for the celebrated quarries, and their deserted obelisk. Before we came down from our point of survey, we saw the American party crossing, in a ferry-boat, to Elephantine. They had arrived after us, and were to set out on their return to Cairo the next day!

As we sat on deck under our awning this evening, the scene was striking;—the brilliant moonlight resting on the quiet groves, but contending on the shore with the yellow glow from the west, which gilded the objects there; and especially the boat-building near the water's edge;—the crews forming picturesque groups, with their singing, clapping and dancing, while close beside them, and almost among them, were the Rais and two other men going through their prayers and prostrations. This boat-building was the last we saw up the river: and a rude affair it was:—the planks not planed, and wide apart, and irregular.

A kandjia was here which had brought a party of Turkish officers. We had the offer of it, to take us to the Second Cataract; our dahabieh being, of course, too large to ascend the Cataract here. Our gentlemen thought it would not do;—that Mrs. Y. and I could not put up with its accommodations, even for a

fortnight. We thought we could: but we agreed that the first thing to be done was to go to the head of the Cataract, and see what boats could be had there.

The next morning, therefore, we had breakfast early, and set off on asses for Mahatta,—the village at the head of the Cataract. This, our first ride in the Desert, was full of wonder and delight. It was only about three miles: but it might have been thirty from the amount of novelty in it. Our thick umbrellas, covered with brown holland, were a necessary protection against the heat, which would have been almost intolerable, but for the cool north wind.—I believed before that I had imagined the Desert: but now I felt that nobody could. No one could conceive the confusion of piled and scattered rocks, which, even in a ride of three miles, deprives a stranger of all sense of direction, except by the heavens. These narrow passes among black rocks, all suffocation and glare, without shade or relief, are the very home of despair. The oppression of the sense of sight disturbs the brain, so that the will of the unhappy wanderer cannot keep his nerves in order. I thought of poor Hagar here, and seemed to feel her story for the first time. I thought of Scotch shepherds lost in the snow, and of their mild case in comparison with that of Arab goat-herds lost in the Desert. The difference is of death by lethargy and death by torture. We were afterwards in the depth of Arabia, and lived five weeks in tents in the Desert: but no Arabian scene impressed me more with the characteristics of the Desert than this ride of three miles from Aswán to Mahatta. The presence of dragon-flies in the Desert surprised me;—not only here, but in places

afterwards—where there appeared to be no water within a great distance. To those who have been wont to watch the coming forth of the dragon-fly from its sheath on the rush on the margin of a pool, and flitting about the mountain watercourse, or the moist meadows at home, it is strange to see them by dozens glittering in the sunshine of the Desert, where there appears to be nothing for them to alight on;—nothing that would not shrivel them up, if they rested for a moment from the wing. The hard dry locust seemed more in its place, and the innumerable beetles, which everywhere left a net-work of delicate tracks on the light sand. Distant figures are striking in the desert, in the extreme clearness of light and shade. Shadows strike upon the sense here as bright lights do elsewhere. It seems to me that I remember every figure I ever saw in the Desert;—every veiled woman tending her goats, or carrying her water-jar on her head;—every man in blue skirting the hillocks; every man in brown guiding his ass or his camel through the sandy defiles of the black rocks, or on a slope by moonlight, when he casts a long shadow. Every moving thing has a new value to the eye in such a region.

When we came out upon Mahatta, we were in Nubia, and found ourselves at once in the midst of the wildness of which we had read so much in relation to the First Cataract. The Mississippi is wild: and the Indian grounds of Wisconsin, with their wigwam camps, are wild: but their wildness is only that of primitive Nature. This is fantastic,—impish. It is the wildness of Prospero's island. Prospero's island and his company of servitors were never out of my head between

Aswán and the next placid reach of the river above Philæ.—The rocks are not sublime: they are too like Titanic heaps of black paving-stones to be imposing otherwise than by their oddity: and they are strewn about the land and river to an excess and with a caprice which takes one's imagination quite out of the ordinary world. Their appearance is made the more strange by the cartouches and other hieroglyphic inscriptions which abound among them;—sometimes on a face above the river; sometimes on a mere ordinary block near the path;—sometimes on an unapproachable fragment in the middle of the stream. When we emerged from the Desert upon Mahatta, the scene was somewhat softened by the cultivation behind the village, and the shade of the spreading sycamores and clustered palms. Heaps of dates, like the wheat in our granaries for quantity, lay piled on the shore; and mounds of packages (chiefly dates) ready for export. The river was all divided into streamlets and ponds by the black islets. Where it was overshadowed, it was dark grey or deep blue; but where the light caught it, rushing between a wooded island and the shore, it was of the clearest green.—The people were wild,—especially the boys, who were naked and excessively noisy: but I did not dislike their behaviour, which was very harmless, though they had to be flogged out of the path, like a herd of pigs.—We saw two boats, and immediately became eager to secure the one below. I was delighted at this, as we were thus not deprived of the adventure of ascending the Cataract.

On our return, we sent Alee forward to secure the kandjia; and we diverged to the quarries, passing

through the great cemetery with its curious grave-stones, inscribed in the Cufic character. The marks of the workmen's tools are as distinct as ever on the granite of the quarries. There are the rows of holes for the wooden pegs or wedges which, being wetted, expanded and split the stone. There are the grooves and the notches made, by men who died several thousands of years ago, in preparation for works which were never done. There are the playful or idle scratches made by men of old in a holiday mood. And there, too, is the celebrated obelisk, about which, I must take leave to say, some mistakes are current at this day.

It may look like trifling to spend any words on the actual condition of an obelisk in the quarry : but, if we really wish to know how the ancients set about works which modern men are unable to achieve, we must collect all the facts we can about such works, leaving it for time to show which are important and which are not. We spend many words in wondering what could be the mechanical powers known to the old Egyptians, by which they could detach, lift, carry, and dress such masses of stone as our resources are wholly inadequate to deal with. When we chance to meet with one such mass in a half-finished state, it is surely worth while to examine and report upon its marks and peculiarities, however unaccountable, as one step towards learning hereafter, how they came there.

This obelisk was declared, by a traveller who judged naturally by the eye, to be lying there unfinished because it was broken before it was completely detached from the rock. Other travellers have repeated the tale,—one measuring the mass, and taking for granted that an

irregular groove along the upper surface was the "crack,"—the "fissure;" and another, comfortably seated on an ass, not even getting down to touch it at all. Our friend, Mr. E., was not satisfied without looking into things with his own eyes and his own mind: and he not only measured and poked in the sand, but cleared out the sand from the grooves till he had satisfied himself that there is no breakage or crack about the obelisk at all.

The upper surface is (near the centre of its length,) about two feet broad: and there is every appearance of the other three sides having the same measurement,—as the guide says they have,—allowing for the inequalities of the undressed stone. There is no evidence that it is not wholly detached from the rock. Of course, we moderns cannot move it; but the guide declares that, when cleared of sand, a stick may be passed under in every part. And it seems improbable that the apex of the obelisk should be reduced to form before the main body is severed from the rock.—As for the supposed "fissure," it is certainly a carefully wrought groove, and no crack. Its sides are as smooth as any tablet; and its breadth appears to be uniform:—about an inch wide at the top. Its depth is about three inches; and it is smooth and sound all along the bottom. Near it is a slight fault in the stone; a skin-deep crack,—little more than a roughness of the surface. Across the upper face were some remarkable holes. Besides those which are usually prepared for wedges or pegs, there were two deep grooves, slanting and not parallel. If they had been straight and parallel, we should have immediately supposed them intended to hold the chains

or ropes by which the mass was to be raised : and it is still possible that they were so. But we do not know what to make of the groove which is commonly called the fissure. It is deep ; it is longitudinal ; and it is devious ; not intended, evidently, to bear any relation to the centre of the face, nor to be parallel with either side, nor to be straight in its direction. The only conjecture we could form was that it was in preparation for the dressing of the stone, after the erection of the obelisk : but then its depth appears too great for such a purpose. We observed a considerable bulge on the upper face of this obelisk. We all know that this is necessary, to obviate that optical deception which gives an appearance of concavity to a perfectly correct pyramidal line : and we all know that the old Egyptians so well understood this architectural secret that they might be the teachers of it to all the world. But the knowledge of this does not lessen the surprise, when the proof of it, in so gigantic a form, is under one's hand.—The block was ninety feet long above the sand, when we were there ; and the guide said that the sand covered thirty more. Judging of the proportions of the apex from what we saw, it must either require much cutting away in the dressing, or be a little spire. It would doubtless be much reduced by cutting.—We left the quarries, full of speculation about what manner of men they were who cut and carved their granite mountains in this noble style, and by what inconceivable means they carried away their spoils. It would hardly surprise me more to see a company of ants carrying a life-size statue, than it did to measure the building stones and colossi of the East.

In our walk this evening we saw a pretty encampment of Albanian soldiers among the palms. One had to rub one's eyes to be sure that one was not in a theatre. The open tent, with the blue smoke rising, the group of soldiers, in their Greek dress, on the ground, and seen between the palm stems; the arms piled against a tree, and glittering in the last rays of the sun;—all this was like a sublimated opera scene. And there was another, the next morning, when they took their departure southwards, their file of loaded camels winding away from under the shade into the hot light.

We went early to Elephantine, this morning (the 27th) after seeing the Scotch boat arrive. The remains on Elephantine are not now very interesting;—at least, we did not find them so: and we do not enter into the ordinary romance about this "Island of Flowers." Not only we saw no flowers; but we could perceive no traces of any: and our guide could not be made to understand what flowers were. Conversation was carried on in Italian, of which the man appeared to have no lack. First he said there were many flowers there: then that there were none: and he ended by asking what "fiori" were. He shook his head in despair when we showed him. The northern end of the island is green and fertile: but the southern end is one dreary heap of old stones and broken pottery. The quantity of broken pottery in these places is unaccountable,—incredible.

The quays are gone, and the great flight of steps to the river. The little ancient temple of Kneph is gone; and another, and the upper portion of the Nilometer were pulled down, some years since, to supply building

stone for an official's palace at Aswán. We saw, at the Nilometer, sculptured stones built in among rough ones,—some being upside down,—some set on end. And this is all we could make out of this edifice. There is a granite gateway of the time of Alexander ; and this is the only erect work of any interest.—There is a statue of red granite, with the Osiride emblems ;—a mean and uncouth image, in comparison with most that we saw. Some slender and broken granite pillars lie about, a little to the north of the gateway : and one of them bears a sculptured cross ; which shows that they were part of a Christian temple.

The people on the island are Nubians. Many of their faces, as well as their forms, are fine : and they have the same well-fed and healthy appearance as we observe among the people generally, all along the great valley, and especially in the Nubian part of it. Some of the children were naked ; some had ragged clothing ; and many were dressed in substantial garments, though of the dusty or brown colours which convey an impression of dirt to an English eye. The children's hair was shining, even dripping with the castor-oil which was to meet our senses everywhere in Nubia.

Our Scotch friends called while we were at breakfast, and offered us their small boat for an expedition to Philœ. Much as I longed to see Philœ, I was startled at the idea of going by water in a small boat, as a mere morning trip : and I was sorry to see our saddles put away, as it appeared to me more practicable to go by the shorter way of the desert, taking a boat from Mahatta. If we had known what we soon learned about the water passage, we should not have dreamed of

such an adventure. My next uneasiness was at finding that we were going with only Arab rowers, without an interpreter. It certainly was foolish: but the local Rais had arranged the affair; and it was not for us to dispute the wisdom of the man who must know best. I am glad we went; for we obtained admirable views of this extraordinary part of the river, at more leisure, and with more freedom than when ascending the Cataract in our kandjia, amidst the hubbub of a hundred natives.

The wear of the rocks by thousands of annual inundations exhibits singular effects, in holes, unaccountable fissures, grotesque outlines, and gigantic piling up of blocks. The last deposit of soil on the slopes of smooth stones, and in every recess and crevice, reminded me of the odd tillage one sees in Switzerland, where a miniature field is made on the top of a boulder, by confining the deposited earth with a row of stones. And when we were driven to land, in the course of the morning, it was striking to see in what small and parched recesses a few feet of millet and vetches were grown, where the soil would yield anything. The deposit was always graduated, always in layers, however little there might be of it. In some stones in the middle of the current, there were wrought grooves, and holes for wedges; for what purpose, and whether these stones were always in the middle of the current, let those say who can. They looked like a preparation for the erection of colossal statues, which would have a finer effect amidst this frontier cataract than any Madonna del Mare has amidst the lagoons of Venice. The water here was less turbid than we had yet seen it. Its gushings round the rocks were glorious to see, and, in my opinion, to

feel, as we made directly towards them, in order to be swirled away by them to some opposite point which we could not otherwise reach. The only time I was really startled was when we bumped tremendously upon a sunken rock. I saw, however, that the rowers were confident and merry; and when this is the case with local residents, in any critical passage of foreign travel, one may always feel secure. Remembering this, I found our hard won passages through sharp little rapids, and the eagerness and hubbub of the rowers delightful. But all did not find it so: and truly there was a harum-scarum appearance about the adventure which justified a pause and reconsideration what we should do.

It was impossible to obtain any information from the Arabs. Pantomime may go a good way with any people in Europe, from a general affinity of ideas, and of their signs, which prevails over a continent where there is a nearly uniform civilisation. But it avails nothing, and is even misleading, between Europeans and the natives of Oriental countries. Our gentlemen were much given to pantomime, in the absence of an interpreter; and it was amusing to me to see, with the practised eye of a deaf person, how invariably they were misunderstood; and often, when they had no suspicion of this themselves. They naturally employed many conventional signs; and, of course, so did the Arabs: and such confusion arose out of this that I begged my friends never to put down in their journals any information which they believed they had obtained by means of pantomime. It might be that while they were inquiring about a pyramid, the Arabs might be replying about the sun: while they were asking

questions about distance, the Arabs might be answering about ploughing : and so on. To-day we could make out nothing : so we offered very intelligible signs that we wished to land. We landed in a cove of a desert region on the eastern shore : and while Mr. E. was drawing maps on the sand, and the rowers were clamouring and gesticulating about him, I made for a lofty pile of rocks, a little way inland, to seek for a panoramic view. It was dreadfully hot : but I obtained a magnificent view of the river, as well as the surrounding country ; by far the finest view of the Cataract that offered.—I could see nothing of Philœ, which was in fact hidden behind the eastern promontories : but from the great sweep the river made above us, and the indescribable intricacy of its channels among its thousand scattered rocks, it seemed plain to me that it would take some hours to reach the Sacred Island. I reported accordingly ; and Mr. E. thought he had ascertained from the crew that it would take three hours to get to Philœ. As it was by this time one o'clock, we decided to return. It afterwards appeared that the three hours the men spoke of were from our dahabieh to Philœ : but I am sure it would have taken much more.

From my point of observation, I had seen that several weirs were constructed among the rapids, where a few blackies were busy,—some leaning over from the rocks, and others up to their shoulders in the stream. Their dusky figures contrasted finely with the glittering waters ; and it was a truly savage African scene. One man came swimming to us, with a log under his breast, bringing a fish half as big as himself. It was

like a gigantic perch ; we bought it for $7\frac{1}{4}d.$; and found it better than Nile fish usually are.—I have often read of the great resource the Egyptians have in the fish of their river. They do not seem to prize it much ; and I do not wonder. We thought the Nile fish very poor in quality, and commended the natives for eating in preference the grain and pulse which their valley yields in abundance.

Several people had collected,—there is no saying from whence—in our cove to see us depart : and I was glad they did ; for their figures on the rocks were beautiful. One little naked boy placed himself on the top of a great boulder in an attitude of such perfect grace,—partly sitting, partly kneeling, with his hands resting on one foot,—that I longed to petrify him, and take him home, an ebony statue, for the instruction of sculptors. There is no training any English child to imitate him. An attitude of such perfect grace must be natural : but not, I suppose, in our climate, or to any one who has sat on chairs.

Our return, with the current, was smooth, pleasant and speedy. We found that the kandjia had been cleaned, sunk, (three drowned rats being the visible result of the process) raised, and dried ; and the stores were now being laid in : and to-morrow we were to go up to the Rapids, to leave the next day clear for the ascent of the Cataract.—This evening was so warm that Mrs. Y. and I walked on the shore for some time without bonnet or shawl ; the first and last occasion, no doubt, of our doing so by moonlight on the 27th of December.

The next morning I rose early, to damp and fold

linen; and I was ironing till dinner-time, that we might carry our sheets and towels in the best condition to the kandjia. No one would laugh at, or despise this who knew the importance, in hot countries, of the condition of linen; and none who have not tried can judge of the difference in comfort of ironed linen and that which is rough dried. By sparing a few hours per week, Mrs. Y. and I made neat and comfortable the things washed by the crew; and when we saw the plight of other travellers,—gentlemen in rough dried collars, and ladies in gowns which looked as if they had been merely wrung out of the wash-tub, we thought the little trouble our ironing cost us well bestowed. Every body knows now that to take English servants ruins every thing,—destroys all the ease and comfort of the journey; and the Arabs cannot iron. They cannot comprehend what it is for. One boat's crew last year decided, after a long consultation, that it was the English way of killing lice. This was not our crew: but I do not think ours understood to the last the meaning of the weekly ceremony of the flat-iron. The dragoman of another party, being sounded about ironing his employer's white trowsers, positively declined the attempt; saying that he had once tried, and at the first touch had burnt off the right leg. If any lady going up the Nile should be so happy as to be able to iron, I should strongly advise her putting up a pair of flat-irons among her baggage. If she can also starch, it will add much to her comfort and that of her party, at little cost of time and trouble.

We went on board our kandjia to dinner, at two

o'clock, and were off for the entrance of the Cataract. The smallness of our boat, after our grand dahabieh, was the cause of much amusement, both to-day and during the fortnight of our Nubian expedition. In the inner cabin there was only just room for Mrs. Y. and me by laying our beds close together; and our dressing-room was exactly a yard square. The gentlemen's cabin was somewhat larger; but not roomy enough to admit of our having our meals there,—unless a strong cold wind drove us in to tea;—which I think happened twice. Our sitting room was a pretty little vestibule, between the cabins and the deck. This exactly held our table and two chairs; the other seats being two lockers, on which were spread gay carpets. When we sat down to our morning employments, we were careful to bring at once all the books, &c., that we were likely to want, as we could not pass in and out without compelling our neighbours to rise to make way. For all this, and though we felt, on our return to our dahabieh, as if we had got from a coaster into a man-of-war, we were never happier than in our little kandjia. There was some amusement in roughing it for a fortnight; and the Nubian part of our voyage was full as interesting as any other.

The Rais of the Cataract was to meet us, the next morning, with his posse, at a point fixed on, above the first rapid, which we were to surmount ourselves. We appeared to be surmounting it, just at dusk. Half our crew were hauling at our best rope on the rocks, and the other half poling on board; and we were slowly,—almost imperceptibly—making way against the rushing current, and had our bows fairly through the last mass

of foam, when the rope snapped. We swirled down and away,—none of us knew whither, unless it were to the bottom of the river. This was almost the most anxious moment of our whole journey : but it was little more than a moment. The boat, in swinging round at the bottom of the rapid, caught by her stern on a sand bank : and our new Rais quickly brought her round, and moored her, in still water, to the bank.

Here we were for the night : and we thought it a pity not to take advantage of the leisure and the moonlight to visit Philœ. So the gentlemen and I crossed the rapids to the main in a punt, mounted capital asses, and struck across the desert for Mahatta, where we could get a boat for Philœ.

The sun had just set when we left the kandjia ; and the Desert looked superb in the after glow. It had the last depth of colouring I have ever seen in pictures, or heard described. The clear forms and ravishing hues make one feel as if gifted with new eyes.

The boat which took us from Mahatta to Philœ was too heavy for her hands, and could hardly stem some of the currents : but at last, about seven o'clock, we set our feet on the Holy Island, and felt one great object of our journey accomplished. What a moment it was, just before, when we first saw Philœ, as we came round the point,—saw the crowd of temples looming in the mellow twilight ! And what a moment it was now, when we trod the soil, as sacred to wise old races of men as Mecca now to the Mohammedan, or Jerusalem to the Christian ; the huge propyla, the sculptured walls, the colonnades, the hypæthral * temple all standing, in

* Hypæthral—open to the sky.

full majesty, under a flood of moonlight! The most sacred of ancient oaths was in my mind all the while, as if breathed into me from without;—the awful oath “By Him who sleeps in Philæ.” Here, surrounded by the imperishable Nile, sleeping to the everlasting music of its distant Cataract, and watched over by his Isis, whose temple seems made to stand for ever, was the beneficent Osiris believed to lie. There are many Holy Islands scattered about the seas of the world: the very name is sweet to all ears: but no one has been so long and so deeply sacred as this. The waters all round were, this night, very still; and the more suggestive were they of the olden age when they afforded a path for the processions of grateful worshippers, who came from various points of the mainland, with their lamps, and their harps, and their gifts, to return thanks for the harvests which had sprung and ripened at the bidding of the god. One could see them coming in their boats, there where the last western light gleamed on the river: one could see them land at the steps at the end of the colonnade: and one could imagine this great group of temples lighted up till the prominent sculpture of the walls looked almost as bright and real as the moving forms of the actual offerers.—But the silence and desertion of the place soon made themselves felt. Our footsteps on the loose stones, and our voices in an occasional question, and the flapping wings of the birds whom we disturbed were the only sounds: and the lantern which was carried before us in the shadowy recesses was a dismal light for such a place.—I could not, under the circumstances, make out any thing of the disposition of the buildings: and I think that a visit to Philæ by moonlight had better be preceded by a visit

to Philæ by daylight : but I am glad to have seen the solemn sight, now that I can look back upon it with the fresh eyes of clear knowledge of the site and its temples.

A kandjia lay under the bank when we arrived. It had brought our Scotch friends from Mahatta ; and we found them in the court of the hypæthral temple, sitting on the terrace wall in the moonlight,—the gentlemen with their chibouques,—the ladies with their bonnets in their hands. Their first and last view of Philæ was on this lovely night : and this was our last sight of them. They were to set off down the river the next morning, at the same hour that we were to begin the ascent of the Cataract. Our greetings, our jokes, our little rivalries were all over ; and the probability was that we should never meet again.—How sorry we were for them that they were turning back ! We not only had Nubia, with its very old temples,—and above all, Aboo-Simbil*—full in prospect, but a return to this island, to obtain a clear knowledge of it. My heart would have been very heavy to-night if this had been my only view of Philæ ;—a view so obscure, so tantalizing, and so oppressive : and I was sorry accordingly for those who were to see it but once, and thus.

Our desert ride in the moonlight was very fine, among such lights and shadows as I never saw by night before. We encountered no hyænas, though our guide carried a musket, in expectation that we should. We crossed the rapids in safety, and reached our boat excessively tired, and the more eager for rest because the next was to be the greatest day of our journey,—unless perhaps that of our passing Thebes.

* Ipsamboul.

CHAPTER VII.

ASCENT OF THE CATARACT.

SUCH an event as the ascent of the Cataract can happen but once in one's life; and we would not hear of going ashore on any such plea as that the feat could be better seen from thence. What I wanted was to feel it. I would have gone far to see a stranger's boat pulled up; but I would not refuse the fortune of being on board when I could. We began, however, with going ashore at the Rapid where we failed the evening before. The rope had been proved untrustworthy; and there was no other till we joined the Rais of the Cataract, with his cable and his posse. Our Rais put together three weak ropes, which were by no means equivalent to one strong one: but the attempt succeeded.

It was a curious scene,—the appearing of the dusky natives on all the rocks around; the eager zeal of those who made themselves our guards, holding us by the arms, as if we were going to jail, and scarcely permitting us to set our feet to the ground, lest we should fall; and the daring plunges and dives of man or boy, to obtain our admiration or our baksheesh. A boy would come riding down a slope of roaring water as confidently as I would ride down a sand-hill on my ass. Their arms, in their fighting method of swimming, go

round like the spokes of a wheel. Grinning boys popped in the currents; and little seven-year-old savages must haul at the ropes, or ply their little poles when the kandjia approached a spike of rock, or dive to thrust their shoulders between its keel and any sunken obstacle: and after every such feat, they would pop up their dripping heads, and cry "baksheesh." I felt the great peculiarity of this day to be my seeing, for the first, and probably the only time of my life, the perfection of savage faculty: and truly it is an imposing sight. The quickness of movement and apprehension, the strength and suppleness of frame, and the power of experience in all concerned this day contrasted strangely with images of the bookworm and the professional man at home, who can scarcely use their own limbs and senses, or conceive of any control over external realities. I always thought in America, and I always shall think, that the finest specimens of human development I have seen are in the United States, where every man, however learned and meditative, can ride, drive, keep his own horse, and roof his own dwelling: and every woman, however intellectual, can do, if necessary, all the work of her own house. At home, I had seen one extreme of power, in the meagre helpless beings whose prerogative lies wholly in the world of ideas: here I saw the other, where the dominion was wholly over the power of outward nature: and I must say I as heartily wished for the introduction of some good bodily education at home as for intellectual enlightenment here. I have as little hope of the one as of the other; for there is at present no natural necessity for either: and nothing short of natural compulsion will avail.

Gymnastic exercises and field sports are matters only of institution and luxury,—good as far as they go, but mere conventional trifles in the training of a man or a nation: and, with all our proneness to toil, I see no prospect of any stimulus to wholesome general activity arising out of our civilisation. I wish that, in return for our missions to the heathen, the heathens would send missionaries to us, to train us to a grateful use of our noble natural endowments,—of our powers of sense and limb, and the functions which are involved in their activity. I am confident that our morals and our intellect would gain inestimably by it. There is no saying how much vicious propensity would be checked, and intellectual activity equalised in us by such a reciprocity with those whose gifts are at the other extreme from our own.

Throughout the four hours of our ascent, I saw incessantly that though much is done by sheer force,—by men enough pulling at a rope strong enough,—some other requisites were quite as essential:—great forecast, great sagacity; much nice management among currents, and hidden and threatening rocks; and much knowledge of the forces and subtilties of wind and water. The men were sometimes plunging, to heave off the boat from a spike or ledge; sometimes swimming to a distant rock, with a rope between their teeth, which they carried round the boulders;—then squatting upon it, and holding the end of the rope with their feet, to leave their hands at liberty for hauling. Sometimes a man dived, to free the cable from a catch under water; then he would spring on board, to pole at any critical pass: and then ashore, to join the long file

who were pulling at the cable. Then there was their patience and diligence—very remarkable when we went round and round an eddy many times, after all but succeeding, and failing again and again from the malice of the wind. Once this happened for so long, and in such a boisterous eddy, that we began to wonder what was to be the end of it. Complicated as were the currents in this spot, we were four times saved from even grazing the rocks, when, after having nearly got through, we were borne back, and swung round to try again. The fifth time, there came a faint breath of wind, which shook our sail for a moment, and carried us over the ridge of foam. What a shout there was when we turned into still water! The last ascent but one appeared the most wonderful,—the passage was, twice over, so narrow,—barely admitting the kandjia,—the promontory of rock so sharp, and the gush of water so strong: but the big rope, and the mob of haulers on the shore and the islets heaved us up steadily, and as one might say, naturally,—as if the boat took her course advisedly.

Though this passage appeared to us the most dangerous, it was at the last that the Rais of the Cataract interfered to request us to step ashore. We were very unwilling; but we could not undertake the responsibility of opposing the local pilot. He said it was mere force that was wanted here, the difficulty being only from the rush of the waters, and not from any complication of currents. But no man would undertake to say that the rope would hold; and if it did not, destruction was inevitable. The rope held; we saw the boat drawn up steadily and beautifully; and the work was done.

Mr. E., who has great experience in nautical affairs, said that nothing could be cleverer than the management of the whole business. He believed that the feat could be achieved nowhere else, as there are no such swimmers elsewhere.

The mob who took charge of us on the rocks were horribly noisy: the granite we trod on was burning hot, shining and slippery: the light, at an hour after noon, was oppressive: and the wildness of the scenery and of the thronging people was bewildering. The clamour was the worst; and for four hours there was no pause. This is, I think, the only thing in the whole affair really trying to a person of good nerves. The cries are like those of rage and fear; and one has to remind one's self incessantly that this is only the people's way: and then the clamour goes for nothing. When they do speak gently, as to us on matters of business, their voices are agreeable enough, and some very sweet.—Most of the throng to-day were quite black: some tawny. One man looked very odd. His complexion was chocolate colour, and his breast and top-knot red.

We returned to the boat heated and thirsty, and quite disposed for wine and water. The critical passage of four hours was over; but the Rais of the Cataract did not leave us till we were off Mahatta, there being still much skill and labour required to pass us through the yet troubled waters. Our boat rolled a good deal, having but little ballast as yet: and when we were about to go to dinner, a lurch caused the breakage of some soup plates and other ware: so we put off dinner till we should be at Philœ, where we were to complete our ballast.—Meantime, we had the poor amusement of

seeing a fight on shore,—the Rais and his men quarrelling about the baksheesh. The pay of the Rais and his men was included in the contract for the kandjia: but of course the Rais asked for baksheesh. He was offered ten piastres, and refused them; then a bottle of wine, which he put under his arm, demanding the ten piastres too. Then he refused both, and went off; but returned for the money; and ended by fighting about the division of it. The amount is small to contend about; but travellers should remember those who come after them, and the real good of the natives; and not give way to encroachment, to save a little trouble.

It was four o'clock when we moored at Philæ under what once was the great landing place of the island, on the east side. The hypæthral temple, vulgarly called Pharaoh's Bed, stood conspicuous on the height above us: and we ran up to it after sunset, while the last of our ballast was stowing,—glad of every opportunity of familiarising our minds with the aspect of the island, before returning to explore the remains in due order.—We had seen nothing more beautiful anywhere than what was before us this evening on our departure by moonlight. The pillars of the open temple first, and then the massive propyla of the great temple stood up against the soft, clear sky, and palms fringed every bank, and crowned every little eminence. The wildness of the rocky boundary was lost, by this light. We felt that we had, for the present, done with rapids and islands: we were fairly in Nubia, and were now passing into the broad full stream of the Nile, here calmer than ever, from being so near the dam of the islands. The Lybian range shone distinctly yellow by moonlight.

I thought that I had never heard of colour by moonlight before ; and I was sure I had never seen it. Now my eyes feasted on it night by night. The effect of palm clumps standing up before these yellow backgrounds, which are themselves bounded by a line of purple hills, with silver stars hanging above them, and mysterious heavenly lights gushing up from behind all, exceeds in rich softness any colouring that sunshine can show.

CHAPTER VIII.

NUBIA.—THE SECOND CATARACT.

WE were not long in finding how different Nubia is from the lower part of the Nile valley, both in its aspect and its people. We soon began to admire these poor Berbers, for their industry and thrift, their apparent contentment, and their pleasant countenances. The blue underlip of the women, some tattoo marks here and there, nose rings, and hundreds of tiny braids of hair, all shining and some dripping with castor oil, might seem likely to make these people appear ugly enough to English eyes: but the open good humour of most of their countenances, and the pathetic thoughtfulness of many, rendered them interesting, I may say charming to us;—to say nothing of the likeness we were constantly tracing in them to the most ancient sculptured faces of the temples. The dyed underlip was the greatest drawback; perhaps from its having a look of disease. The women wore silver bracelets almost universally; and a quantity of bead necklaces. They swathed themselves sufficiently in their blue garments without covering their faces. The men wore very little clothing: the children, for the most part, none at all, except that the girls had a sort of leather fringe tied round the loins. Sometimes the people

would run away from us, or be on the start to do so, as we were walking on the shore. Sometimes the women would permit us to bid for their necklaces, or would offer matting or baskets for sale. Sometimes we found their huts empty,—left open while the family were out at work: and we were glad of such an opportunity of examining their dwellings, and forming some notion of their household economy.

The first we entered in the absence of the inmates was a neat house,—the walls mud, and narrowing upwards, so as to give the building a slightly pyramidal form. Mud walls, it must be remembered, are in Nubia quite a different affair from what they are in rainy countries. The smooth plastering gives the dwelling a neat appearance, inside and out: and it is so firmly done, and so secure from wet in that climate, as not to crumble away, or, apparently, to give out dust, as it would with us.—The flat roof of this house was neatly made of palm: the stems lying along, and the fronds forming a sort of thatch. A deewan of mud was raised along the whole of both the side walls; and two large jars, not of the same size, were fixed at the end; one, no doubt, to hold water; the other, grain. The large jar for grain is often fixed outside the house, opposite the door: and we were assured that it is never plundered. Some dwellings have partitions, one or two feet high, separating, as we suppose, the sleeping-places of the family. If the peasant has the rare fortune of possessing a cow and calf, or if there is an ox in the establishment, to work the sakia, there is a mud shed, with a flat roof like the house. The fences are of dry millet stalks, which rise from eleven to fourteen feet

high. In the garden or field plot is often seen a pillar of stones, whereon stands the slinger, whose business it is to scare away the birds from the crops. The field plot is often no more than a portion of the sloping river bank. At the season of our visit the plots were full of wheat, barley and lupins. The kidney bean, with a purple blossom and very dark leaves, was beautiful: and so were the castor oil and cotton plants.

Behind the dwelling which we visited, the dark stony desert came down to the very path: and among its scattered rocks lay, not at once distinguishable to the eye, the primitive burying ground of the region. The graves were marked out with ovals of stones; and thorns were laid thick on the more recent ones. A dreary place it looked for the dead to lie in: but the view from it was beautiful; and especially of the hedge-like Lybian bank over the river, where the fringe of mimosas was all overgrown and compacted with bind-weed of the brightest green.

I do not at present see that much can be done for the Nubians, as there certainly may for the Egyptians. In Egypt, the population once amounted to 8,000,000, or nearly so; while now it is supposed to be not more than 2,500,000: and there seems no reason why it should not, with the knowledge and skill of our own time, rise to what it once was, and exceed it. Everywhere there are tokens, even to the careless eye of a passing traveller, of land let out of cultivation,—yielded up without a struggle to the great old enemy, the Desert; and even to the encroachments of the friendly Nile. There are signs that drainage is as much wanted as irrigation. However much the natural face of the

country may be supposed to have changed, there is abundant evidence of wilful and careless lapse. In Nubia it is far otherwise. There, not only are the villages diminutive,—almost too small to be called hamlets,—and the sprinkling of people between them is so scanty as barely to entitle the country to be called inhabited, but this is clearly from the scarcity of cultivable land. That it was always so is hardly conceivable when we think of the number of temples still visible between the first and second cataracts, and the many villages declared by Pliny to have studded both shores: but that it is to be helped now, I do not see how any one can show who has beheld the hopeless yellow desert, with its black volcanic rocks, coming down to the very river. As the people have no raw material for any manufacture, it is not easy to tell how they could prosper by other kinds of industry, if Egypt supplied them ever so plentifully with food. It appeared to us that they were diligent and careful in making the most of what they have. As soon as we crossed their frontier, we saw the piers which they make,—the stone barriers built out into the stream to arrest the mud as it is carried down, and thus obtain new land. There are so many of these as to be mischievous in some parts; as, when these piers are opposite to each other, they alter the currents, and narrow the river.—We saw dusky labourers on the banks, toiling with the hoe, to form the soil into terraces and ledges, so as to make the most of it. From their diligence, it seems as if the Nubians had sufficient security to induce them to work: and their appearance is that of health, cheerfulness and content. What more can

be done for them, beyond perhaps improving their simple arts of life, it is difficult to say.

Simple enough, indeed, are their arts. Early one morning, when walking ashore, I came upon a loom which would excite the astonishment of my former fellow-townsmen, the Norwich weavers. A little pit was dug in the earth, under a palm;—a pit just big enough to hold the treadles and the feet of the weaver, who sits on the end of the pit. The beam was made of a slender palm stem, fixed into two blocks. The treadles were made of spines of the palm fixed into bits of stick. The shuttle was, I think, a forked twig. The cotton yarn was even, and the fabric good; that is, evenly woven. It was, though coarse, so thin that one might see the light through: but that was intended, and only appropriate to the climate. I might have wondered at such a fabric proceeding from such an apparatus, if I had not remembered the muslins of India, produced in looms as rude as this. It appears too, from the paintings in the tombs, that the old Egyptian looms were of nearly as simple a construction, though the people were celebrated for their exports of fine linen and woollen stuffs. The stout-looking gay chequered sails of the boats, and the diversified dresses of the people represented in the tombs, were no doubt the produce of the rude looms painted up beside them.—The baskets made by the Nubians are strong and good.—Their mats are neat; but neither so serviceable nor so pretty as those of India: but then, these people have not such material as the Hindoos.—Their rope-making is a pretty sight;—prettier even than an English ropewalk; though that is a treat to

the eye. We often saw men thus employed,—one end of their strands being tied to the top of a tall palm, while they stood at the other, throwing the strands round till they would twist no more.

As for the rent paid by the Nubians for their land,—what we learned is this: but it must be observed that it is very difficult, in these countries, to obtain reliable information. In the most civilized parts, there are so few data, and in the more primitive, the people are so little in the habit of communicating with persons who are not familiar with their condition and ways, that it is scarcely possible to find any uniformity of testimony on any matters of custom or arrangement,—even the simplest. When the people tell of their taxes, the English traveller finds them so enormous that he is incredulous, or too indignant to carry away any accurate knowledge of the facts, unless he remembers that taxes in Egypt are not the same thing as taxes in Europe.

As I understand the matter, it is thus, with regard to these Nubians.—The Pasha holds the whole land and river of Egypt and Nubia in fee-simple, except as much as he has given away, for its revenues, to favoured individuals: and his rents are included in what are called his taxes. In Egypt, the people pay tax on the land. In Nubia, they pay it on the sakias and palms. The palms, when large, pay a piastre and a quarter (about 3*d*.) each, per annum: when small, three-fourths of a piastre. Each sakia pays a tax of three hundred and fifty piastres, or 3*l*. 10*s*.; and the payer may appropriate as much land as the sakia will water. The quantity taken is usually from eight hundred to twelve hundred square yards.

The mode of collecting the taxes is quite another matter. By corruption in the agents, or a bad practice of taking the amount in kind, or on account, the collector fixing the marketable value of the produce, there may be cruel oppression. In Egypt, it is certain this oppression does exist to a dreadful extent. We did not happen to hear of it in Nubia; and I cannot say how it is there. But, be it as it may, it is a different question from the amount of tax.

What the peasant actually pays for is the land, as above mentioned, the water-wheel itself, the excavation in which it works, the shed under which it stands, and the ox or pair of oxen by which it is driven. How far his bargain answers to him must depend on the marketable value of his produce, in a country little affected by variations of seasons. He has not, however, the advantage of an open market. There is nobody at hand to buy, unless by the accident of a trading kandjia coming by; and he has not usually the means of sending far. The tax-collector must therefore commonly be his market; and not such an one as to enable the stranger to estimate his affairs with any accuracy. All we could do was to observe whether he seemed to have enough of his produce left over for the support of his family, and whether his land appeared to be well tilled. I can only repeat that the people we saw in Nubia looked generally healthful and contented; and that they seemed to be making the most of their little belts and corners of cultivable land. It is to be observed however, that we remarked a great number of ruined villages, and that we could obtain no answer from either dragoman or Rais as to how this happened. They

declared they did not know; and, for once, Alce had neither information nor theory to offer. Which was the popular enemy, the Desert or the Pasha, I cannot undertake to say. -

Our kandia was hired for twenty-five days, for the sum of 13*l.* 10*s.*; this including all the charges of ascending the Cataract, and of the crew,—(eight men) except the steersman. Of these eight men, I think four were from our dahabieh. Our rais, and the rest of our crew were left at Aswán, in charge of the boat and such of our property as we did not take with us. Among those whom we carried up were two of our quiet serviceable Nubians. Among those who remained behind was the Buck, as we called him: perhaps the least serviceable of the whole crew, and certainly the least quiet and most troublesome; but he was so extremely amusing with his pranks that we missed him, during this fortnight, more than we should a better lad.—Our other buffoon was with us,—the cook. An excellent cook he was; but I do not know that he was much else,—except a long story-teller and a consummate coxcomb. He was a bad riser in this (to him) winter weather; not a good hand at giving us breakfast early; and we were therefore not sorry that he declined going through the Desert with us afterwards. The manner of declining, however, smacked of his coxcombry. “I!” said he. “I go through the Desert to Syria! No, no: it is all very well for these English, whom nobody inquires after, to go and be killed in Syria: but I am a man whose life is of importance to his family. They may go without me.” And we went with a better man in his place. During this

Nubian voyage, however, he was in his glory,—among stranger comrades who would listen to his long stories. As I sat on deck in the evenings, I used to see him at the bows, flattering himself that he was doing his proper work,—holding by the wings a poor fluttering turkey about to have its throat cut, and brandishing his great glittering knife, in the energy of his story-telling. How many times have I chafed at the suspense of one poor bird after another, thus held, head downwards, till the magniloquent cook should have finished his anecdote ! He fed us well, however, making a variety very honourable to him in the mutton, fowls and eggs which we lived on during the voyage.—Beef and veal have been out of the question since the murrain in 1843. Since that time, the cattle have not been enough to work the sakias ; and of course, there are none for food. Mr. Y. once had the luck to fall in with a piece of beef;—at least, we were assured it was beef : but the only good we got out of it was a lesson not to look for beef any more. There is great variety to be made out of a sheep, however, as our cook continually proved to us.—I have said that he succeeded well in our Christmas plum-pudding. The only fire we had last winter was that which he made with a pool of brandy in the middle of our pudding. Almost the only failure he made was with a goose which we got at Thebes. We thought much of this goose, as a change from the everlasting fowls and turkeys ; but the cook boiled it ; and it looked anything but tempting. His excuse was that he feared, if he roasted it, that it would be “stiff ;”—meaning tough.

All the people on board, and we ourselves, found the

weather cold in Nubia ;—that is, in the evenings and mornings ; for at noon it was hot enough to make us glad of fans and water-melon. We entered the tropic at three p.m. of December 30th : and from that time till our return, we seemed sentenced to shiver early and late, in cold strong winds, such as we had hardly met with in the more northerly parts of the river.—But the mild nights when we were at anchor were delicious :—none more so than that of the first day of this year. We sauntered along the camel-track which ran between the shore and the fine overhanging rocks of the Arabian desert. The brilliant moonlight cast deep shadows on the sand, and showed us what mighty blocks had fallen, and how others were about to fall. These African nights, soft, lustrous and silent, are worth crossing the world to feel. We met a party of three men, a boy and a donkey,—one of the men carrying a spear. They returned our greeting courteously, but stopped to look after us in surprise. Their tread and ours was noiseless on the sand ; and the only sound within that wide horizon was of a baying dog,—far away on the opposite shore.

The next morning we passed Korosko, and saw the surveying flag of M. Arnault, and the tents of his party of soldiers : but we could not learn how his survey and his search for water proceeded, in preparation for his road to the Red Sea. We were passing temples, from stage to stage, all the way up : and very clearly we saw them,—each standing on its platform of sand or rock : but we left them all for examination on our return. This return must now be soon :—we sighed to think how soon, when we met, on the morning of January 3rd, the

two boats of a party who told us that if we wished to send letters to England, we must prepare them, as some gentlemen were at Aboo-Simbil, and would presently be passing us. The great temple of Aboo-Simbil,—the chief object of our Nubian voyage, and almost at the extremity of it, so near us! It damped our spirits; but we wrote our letters; and before we had done, the expected boat came up. We little thought that morning, any of us, that our three parties would join in the Desert, and that we should live together in Arabia for five weeks. Yet so it turned out.

I had been watching the winds and the hours in the fear that we should pass Aboo-Simbil in the dark. But when I came on deck, on the morning of the 4th, I found, to my great joy, that we were only a few miles from it, while a fresh breeze was carrying us well on our course. We passed it before breakfast.

The façade is visible from a considerable distance: and as soon as it becomes visible, it fixes the eye by the singularity of such an object as this smoothed recess of the rugged rock. I found it unlike what I expected, and unlike, I thought, all the representations of it that I had seen. The portal looked low in proportion to the colossi: the façade was smaller, or at least narrower, than I had supposed; and the colossi much nearer together. The white-wash which Champollion (it is said) left on the face of the northernmost colossus has the curious effect of bringing out the expression of countenance, so as to be seen far off. Nothing can be more strange than so extremely distinct a revelation of a face, in every feature, perhaps a mile off. It is stranger than the first apparition of the goodly profile

of the bronze Borromeo, near Lago Maggiore: because not only the outline of the features stands out clear, but every prominence and shadow of the face. The expression of this colossus is very agreeable;—it is so tranquil and cheerful. We had not yet experienced the still stranger sensation of seeing a row of statues precisely alike in all respects. We did not feel it now: for one of the faces being white, and another being broken, and many details lost by distance, the resemblance was not complete enough to cause in us that singular emotion.

The smaller temple of “the Lady of Aboshek,”—Athor—beside the large one, is very striking, as seen from the river. The six statues on the façade stand out boldly between buttresses; and their reclining backwards against the rock has a curious effect. All about both temples are inscribed tablets, which look like doors opening into the rock.—We had now seen, for the first time, a rock temple: and we were glad that it was the noblest that we saw first. In estimating it, we must remember what Ethiopia was to the Egyptians of its time. The inscription “foreign land” is appended to the titles of Athor in the smaller temple: and the establishment of these edifices here is what it would have been to the Romans who, conquering Great Britain, should have carried their most solemn worship to the Orkneys, and enthroned it there in the noblest edifice they could erect. But we could not fully estimate this till we had examined the temple on our return: nor can my readers do so till the time comes for a fuller account of these great works.

The wind was favourable all day, and at night, as we

approached Wadee Halfa, very strong. It is to be wished that we had some full meteorological reports of these regions, both for the sake of science and the guidance of travellers. Every voyager, I believe, speaks of strong wind, and, in the travelling season, north wind, near Wadee Halfa. Has any one heard of calm weather there? On inquiry, on the spot, we were told that there is almost always a strong wind, and frequent gales: sometimes from the south, but usually from the north. This night we had experience of a Nile gale.

Our sail was rarely tied, any part of the way; and our Nubian Rais had it always held. To-night it was held by a careful personage, who minded his business. First, our foresail was taken in, as the wind rose. Then we went sounding on, the poles on each side being kept constantly going. Nevertheless, we struck on a sand-bank with a great shock, and the main-sail was let fly. Half-a-dozen poor fellows, already shivering with cold, went over the side, and heaved us off. The wind continued to rise; the night was growing dark; and presently we grounded again. The sail was let go; but it would not fly. The wind strengthened; the sail was obstinate, and the men who had sprung aloft to furl it could not get it in. We seemed to be slowly but surely going over: and for several minutes (a long time in such circumstances) it seemed to me that our only chance was in the mud-bank on which we had struck being within our depth. But it was a poor chance; for there was deep water and a strong current between us and the shore: and it was in an uninhabited part of the country. Of our own party, no one spoke. Mr. E. was the only one of us who understood these matters;

and as he stood on the watch, we would not interrupt him by questions. Indeed, the case was plain enough; and I saw under his calmness that he felt this to be, as he afterwards told me, the most anxious moment of our adventures. Alee flew about giving orders amidst the rush of the wind; and the cook worked at the poling with all his strength. Even at such a moment I could not but be struck with the lights from the kitchen and the cabin shining on the struggling men and restless sail which were descending together to the water, and on the figures of the Rais, Alee and another, as they stood on the gunwale, hauling at a rope which was fastened to the top of the mast. Amidst the many risks of the moment, the chief was that our tackle would not hold: and a crack was heard now and then among other awful noises. By this time, the inclination of the deck was such that it was impossible to stand, and I had to cling with all my strength to the window of the vestibule. For some time, the Rais feared to quit his hold of the rope on the gunwale; but at last he flung it away, threw off his clothes in a single instant, and sprang up the mast like a cat. His strong arms were what was wanted aloft. The sail was got in, and we righted. The standing straight on one's feet was like a strange new sensation after such a peril.

It was still some time before we were afloat again; and our crew were busy in the water till we were quite sorry for them. When we drifted off at last, our sail was spread again, and we went seething on through the opposing currents to find our proper anchorage at Wadee Halfa. And there again we had almost as much difficulty as before in getting in our sail. This is the

worst of the latteen sails which look so pretty, and waft one on so well. We were wrenched about, and carried down some way before we could moor.

The next morning was almost as cold as the night : but we preferred this to heat, as our business to-day was to ride through the western desert to the rock of Abooseer,—the furthest point of our African travel. Before breakfast, the gentlemen took a short walk on shore, being carried over the intervening mud. They saw a small village, and a school of six scholars. The boys wrote, to the master's dictation, with reed pens, on tablets of wood, smoothed over with some white substance. They wrote readily, and apparently well. The lesson was from the Kurán ; and the master delivered it in a chaunting tone.

Two extremely small asses were brought down, to cross with us to the western bank. We crossed in a ferry-boat whose sail did not correspond very well with the climate. It was like a lace veil mended with ticking. Our first visit was to the scanty remains of an interesting old temple near the landing-place. On our way to it, we passed some handsome children, and a charming group of women under a large sycamore. We thought the people we saw here,—(the most southerly we should ever see—) open-faced and good-looking.—There are large cattle-yards and sheds in this scarcely-inhabited spot, which the Pasha has made a halting-place for his droves of cattle from Dongola. He continues to import largely from thence, to make up his losses from the murrain of 1843. We saw two large droves of as noble beasts as can be seen.

Near the remains of two other unmarked and less

interesting buildings stand the columns of the temple begun, if not wholly erected by two of the Theban kings, soon after the expulsion of the Shepherd race. The dates exist in the hieroglyphic inscriptions of the pillars. This temple was built when the great edifices of Thebes were, for the most part, unthought of. El-Karnac was begun,—its more humble halls; and El-Uksur might be surveyed, by that time, as a fitting site for a temple to answer to El-Karnac, but the El-Kurneh temple and the Ramaséum were not conceived of; for the sovereigns who built them were not born. The Memnon statues were yet in the quarry. The Pyramids were, it is now thought, about two thousand years old: and about this time Moses was watching the erection of the great obelisk (which we call Cleopatra's Needle) at Heliopolis, where he studied. If learned men are right in saying that the Philistines* were of the race expelled from Thebes, they had, by the time this temple was built, settled themselves under the Lebanon and along the southern Syrian coasts, whence they were to be driven out when Moses should be in his grave. If, as some poets tell, Egyptus and Cadmus were among the Shepherd intruders driven out from the Thebaid, the fifty nieces of the one had by this time murdered his sons, their husbands, and the dragon's teeth of the other had sprung up into armed men. It is worth while to mention

* Herodotus tells us (II. 128) that the Egyptians so hated the Pharaohs who built the two largest pyramids that they would not pronounce their names; but called those edifices "by the name of the shepherd Philitis, who in those times led his flocks to pasture in their neighbourhood." Is the slyness of this notice attributable to the priests or the prudential historian?

such fables as these last under their assigned dates ; because we learn thereby to value as we ought the tangible and reliable records we meet in the Egyptian monuments, in contrast with the dim traditions of later born nations. We may also gather useful hints on the history and philosophy of art and science, from the mythi and the monuments together. There is writing on this temple : there is writing on the much-older Pyramids : and it was only at the time of the erection of this temple that letters were carried into Greece. Here is a pillar which is believed to have suggested, in a subsequent age, the Doric column ; the oldest of Greek pillars. Here it stands, remarkable for its many-sided form. It was to us now the oldest we had ever seen : but we afterwards saw some, more precisely what is called Doric, in the tombs of Benec Hasan. The columns of this temple are little more than bases. They are nearly all of the same height : some like mere heaps of stone ; others bearing uninjured inscriptions. They are small remains : but long may they last ! They are the ultimate record of their kind on the ordinary route of Nile travellers, and usually the first subject to their examination.

Our ride to the rock of Abooseer occupied an hour and a half. Thanks to the cool north wind, we highly enjoyed it. Our way lay through a complete desert, over sand hills, and among stony tracts, where scarcely a trace of vegetation is to be seen. In such places the coloquintus is a welcome object, with its thick, milky leaves and stalks, and its velvet blossom. The creeping, thorny coloquintida, too, with its bitter apples, is a handsome plant : or it looked so to us, in the absence of others.

Here and there amidst the dreary expanse, or half hidden in some sandy dell, lay the bleached skeleton of a camel. The only living things seen were a brood of partridges and a jerboa,—a graceful and most agile little creature, whose long extended tail, with its tufted end, gave it a most distinctive appearance. Some of our people started off in pursuit, and would not give up for a long time, making extreme efforts to keep the little creature in view, and drive it in one another's way ; but it baffled them at last, and got back to its hole.

We rode to the foot of the rock of Abooseer, and then ascended it,—in rather heavy spirits, knowing that this was to be our last look southwards. The summit was breezy and charming. I looked down the precipice on which I stood, and saw a sheer descent to the Nile of two hundred feet. The waters were gushing past the foot of this almost perpendicular crag : and from holes in its strata flew out flocks of pigeons, blue in the sunshine. The scene all round under that wide heaven was wild beyond description. There was no moving creature visible but ourselves and the pigeons ; and no trace of human habitation but the ruins of two mud huts, and of a white building on the Arabian shore. The whole scene was composed of desert, river, and black basaltic rocks. Round to the north, from the south-west, there is actually nothing to be seen but blackish, sand-streaked rocks near at hand, and sandy desert further off. To the north-east, the river winds away, blue and full, between sands. Two white sails were on it at the moment. From the river, a level sand extended to the soft tinted Arabian hills, whose varied forms and broken lights and shadows were on the

horizon nearly from the north round to the south-east. These level sands then give place to a black rugged surface, which extends to where two summits,—to-day of a bright amethyst hue,—close the circuit of vision. These summits are at a considerable distance on the way to Dongola. The river is hidden among the black rocks to the south, and its course is not traceable till it peeps out, blue and bright, in two or three places, and hides itself again among the islets. It makes a great bend while thus hidden, and reappears much more to the east. It has now reached the part properly called the Second Cataract; and it comes sweeping down towards the rock on which we stood, dashing and driving among its thousand islets, and then gathering its thousand currents into one, to proceed calmly on its course. Its waters were turbid in the rapids, and looked as muddy where they poured down from shelf or boulder as in the Delta itself: but in all its calm reaches it reflected the sky in a blue so deep as it would not do to paint. The islets were of fantastic forms,—worn by the cataracts of ages: but still, the outlines were angular, and the black ledges were graduated by the action of the waters, as if they had been soft sand. On one or two islands I saw what I at first took for millet-patches: but they were only coarse grass and reeds. A sombre brownish tamarisk, or dwarfed mimosa, put up its melancholy head here and there; and this was all the vegetation apparent within that wide horizon.—I doubt whether a more striking scene than this, to English eyes, can be anywhere found. It is thoroughly African, thoroughly tropical, very beautiful,—most majestic, and most desolate. Something of the

impression might be owing to the circumstances of leave-taking under which we looked abroad from our station: but still, if I saw this scene in an unknown land in a dream, I am sure I should be powerfully moved by it. This day, it certainly interested me more than the First Cataract.

I was tempted by the invitation of a sort of cairn on the top of a hill not far inland, to go there; and thence I obtained another glimpse of the Lybian Desert, and saw two more purple peaks rising westwards, soft and clear.

There is a host of names carved on the accessible side of Abooseer. We looked with interest on Belzoni's and some few others. We cut ours with a nail and hammer. Here, and here only, I left my name. On this wild rock, and at the limit of our range of travel, it seemed, not only natural, but right to some who may come after us. Our names will not be found in any temple or tomb. If we ever do such a thing, may our names be publicly held up to shame, as I am disposed to publish those of the carvers and scribblers who have forfeited their right to privacy by inscribing their names where they can never be effaced!

The time arrived when we must go. It was with a heavy heart that I quitted the rock, turned my back on the south, and rode away.

We found our boat prepared in the usual manner for the descent of the river;—the mainmast removed, and laid along overhead, to support the awning; the kitchen shifted and turned; and the planks of the decks taken up to form seats for the rowers, so as sadly to restrict our small space.—One of our dishes at dinner was an excellent omelette, made of part of the contents of an

ostrich's egg. Two of these eggs were bought for six piastres (1s. 2d.). The contents were obtained by boring a hole with a gimlet. The contents of this egg were found to be equal to twenty-nine of the small hen's eggs of this part of the country.

We began our return voyage about 6 p. m., floating, sometimes broadside down, and sometimes in towards the bank, when it became the business of the rowers to bring us out again into the middle of the stream. The wind was hostile, cold, and strong enough to be incessantly shoving us aside. Our progress was very slow. The first night we moored at six miles only from Wadde Halfa.

The next evening (January 6th) we were within half an hour of Aboo-Simbil when duty ordered me to my cabin. When I left the deck, the moon had risen, the rocks were closing in, and the river was like a placid lake.

In the morning we were to enter upon a new kind of life, as travellers. We were to begin our course of study of the Monuments.

CHAPTER IX.

HISTORICAL SKETCH, FROM MENES TO THE ROMAN
OCCUPATION OF EGYPT.

BEFORE entering upon the study of the Monuments, it seems necessary to obtain something like an orderly view of the state of the country before and during their erection. At best, our conceptions must be obscure enough; but we can form none unless we arrange in our minds what we know of the history of Egypt, of which these monuments are at once the chief evidence and the eternal illustration.

The early history of Egypt differs from that of every other explored country in the nature of its records. Elsewhere, we derive all our knowledge from popular legends, which embody the main ideas to be preserved in forms which are not, and were never meant to be historically true. It is the business of the philosophical historian to separate the true ideas from their environment of fiction, and to mark the time when the narrative, from being mythical becomes historically true;—to classify the two orders of ancient historians,—both inestimable in their way,—the Poets who perpetuate national Ideas, and the Historians who perpetuate national Facts.—With regard to Egypt, we are in possession of as much of this early material as any

nation has furnished ; and we have the monuments besides.

These monuments consist of buildings or excavations, —of the sculptures upon them,—and of their inscriptions. From the edifices or caves we may learn much of the condition, mind, and manners of the people who wrought them, and, if their dates can be obtained, in historical order.—From their sculptures we may learn much of the personages, divine and human, about whom they thought most ; and their inscriptions are of inestimable use in identifying these personages, and in declaring their dates. Being thus in possession of mythical legends, of the writings of historians, and of edifices and excavations covered with sculptures and inscriptions, we are as well supplied with records of the early history of Egypt as we can probably ever be with regard to any ancient people ; and better than we yet are with regard to any other of the nations of the old world.

The legends relating to ancient Egypt are preserved in the works of its historians. It is the business of modern inquirers to separate them from the true historical material, and to extract from them, where possible, the essential Ideas which they embody.

The chief historians of Egypt are Hecataeus of Miletus, who was at Thebes about half a century before Herodotus, and some fragments of whose writings have come down to us :—Herodotus, from whom we learn more than from any other :—the writer of the book of Genesis :—Hecataeus of Abdera, from whose narrative extracts may be found in the works of Diodorus Siculus :—Manetho, an Egyptian, of whom also we have only extracts in other authors ; but who supplies very valu-

able information:—Eratosthenes of Cyrene, whose writings are at once illustrative of those of Manetho and a check upon them: Diodorus Siculus, who travelled in Egypt and wrote a history of it, rather more than half a century before the Christian era: Strabo, who has left us a full account of what he saw in Egypt, between Alexandria and the First Cataract:—and Abdallatif, an Arabian physician, who supplies a valuable report of the state of the Nile Valley and its people when he visited them in the twelfth century.—It is the business of modern inquirers to separate what these historians derived from the depositories of the national mythi from what they personally observed: to compare their works with one another, and to apply them as a key (where this can be done), to the monumental records.

As to the use of the monumental records, several precautions are necessary. Modern inquirers must beware of interpreting what they see by their own favourite ideas,—as travellers do who contrive to see Hebrew groups among the Egyptian sculptures:—they must diligently and patiently work out the knowledge of the ancient language and its signs, and beware of straining the little they know of these, to accommodate any historical theory they may carry in their minds:—and they must remember that the edifice and its sculptures are not always of the same date, and that therefore what is true of the one is not necessarily true of the other.

Without going into any detail (which would fill a volume if entered upon at all) about the respective values of these authorities, and their agreements and

conflicts, I may give a slight sketch of what competent modern inquirers believe we have learned from them.

For our first glimpse into ancient Egyptian life we must go back upon the track of Time far further than we have been accustomed to suppose that track to extend. People who had believed all their lives that the globe and Man were created together were startled when the new science of geology revealed to them the great fact that Man is a comparatively new creation on the earth, whose oceans and swamps and jungles were aforetime inhabited by monsters never seen by human eye but in their fossil remains. People who enter Egypt with the belief that the human race has existed only six thousand years, and that at that date, the world was uninhabited by men, except within a small circuit in Asia, must undergo a somewhat similar revolution of ideas. All new research operates to remove further back the date of the formation of the Egyptian empire. The differences between the dates given by legendary records and by modern research (with the help of contemporary history) are very great: but the one agrees as little as the other with the popular notion that the human race is only six thousand years old.

When Hecataeus of Miletus was at Thebes, about 500 B. C., he spoke, as Herodotus tells us,* to the priests of Amun, of his genealogy, declaring himself to be the sixteenth in descent from a god. Upon this, the priests conducted him into a great building of the temple, where they pointed out to him (as afterwards to Herodotus) the statues of their high priests. Each

* Herod. II. 143.

high priest placed a colossal wooden statue of himself in this place during his life; and each was the son of his predecessor. The priests would not admit that any of these was the son of a god. From first to last they were of human origin; and here, in direct lineal succession, were 345. Taking the average length of human life, how many thousand years would be occupied by the succession of 345 high priests, in a direct line from father to son! According to the priests, it was nearly 5000 years from the time of Horus. They further informed Herodotus that gods did reign in Egypt before they deputed their power to mortals.* They spoke of eight gods who reigned first,—among whom was one answering to Pan of the Greeks: then came twelve of another series: and again, twelve more, the offspring of the second series: and of these Osiris was one; and it was not till after the reign of his son Horus that the first of these 345 high priests came into power. From Osiris to king Amasis, the priests reckoned 15,000 years, declaring that they had exact registers of the successive lives which had filled up the time.† — Such is the legendary history, as it existed 500 years before Christ. We can gather from it thus much,—that the priests then looked back upon a long reach of time, and believed the art of registering to be of an old date.

Here we have the earliest report of dates offered us. According to the latest researches,‡ we cannot place the formation of the Egyptian empire under Menes, nearer to us than 5500 years ago. And the Egyptians

* Herod. II. 144, 146.

† Herod. II. 145.

‡ Bunsen. "Egypt's Place in the World's History."

were then a civilised people, subject to legislation and executive authority, pursuing trade, and capable of the arts. A longer or shorter series of centuries must be allotted for bringing them up to this state, according to the views of the students of social life: but the shortest must bring us back to the current date of the creation of man. How these five or six thousand years are filled up, we may see hereafter.

Leaving it to my readers to fix for themselves the point of time for our survey of the most ancient period of Egyptian history, I may be permitted to appoint the place.—Let us take our stand above the Second Cataract;—on the rock of Abooseer, perhaps, where I could only look over southwards, and not go and learn. This is a good station, because it is a sort of barrier between two chains of monuments: a frontier resting-place, whence one may survey the area of ancient Egyptian civilisation from end to end.

Looking down the river, northwards, beyond the Nubian region (then Ethiopia) beyond the First Cataract, and far away over the great marsh which occupied the Nile valley, we see, coming out of the darkness of oblivion, Menes, the first Egyptian king, turning the river from its course under the Lybian mountain into a new bed, in the middle of the valley.* Thus the priests of Thebes told Herodotus; saying that Menes made the dykes, by which the land was reclaimed, on which Memphis afterwards stood. It must strike every one that this period, 5500 years ago, must have been one of an advanced civilisation; such a work as this embankment requiring scientific ideas and

* Herod. II. 99.

methods, apt tools, and trained men. The priests ascribed to this same king the building of Memphis, and of the great temple of Phthah (answering to Vulcan) in that city. They read to Herodotus a long list of sovereigns (three hundred and thirty) who succeeded Menes; of whom one was an Egyptian woman, and eighteen were Ethiopian kings.* That there should have been a temple of Phthah implies the establishment of a priesthood. That a woman should have occupied the throne, seems to imply the establishment of a principle of hereditary succession: or at least, it tells of the subordination, in this early age, of force to authority. That there should have been Ethiopian sovereigns among the Egyptian implies a relation between the two countries, whether of warfare or commerce.—During all this time, the plain of Thebes lay bare.

The next sovereignty that was established in the valley was at This, about sixty miles below Thebes. A succession of monarchs reigned here,—some say sixteen, some more, — while the plain of Thebes still lay bare.

While these sovereigns were reigning at This, and before Thebes was heard of, the kings of Memphis were building the Pyramids of Geezeh. It is certain that the builders of these pyramids were learned men. How much science is requisite for the erection of such edifices need hardly be pointed out;—the mathematical skill and accuracy; the astronomical science shown in the placing of them true to the cardinal points; the command of mechanical powers which are at this day

* Herod. II. 100.

unknown to us ; and the arts of writing and decoration shown in the inscriptions which covered their outside in the days of Herodotus,* though the casing which contained them is now destroyed. In the neighbouring tombs, however, we have evidence, as will be shown hereafter, of the state of some of the arts at that date : and I may mention here that the sign of the inkstand and reed pen are among the representations in the tombs. There is no doubt as to who built the Pyramids. Colonel Howard Vyse found the kings' names inscribed in them. When the Pyramids were built, it was a thousand years before Abraham was born, and the plain of Thebes still lay bare.

Now we must turn southwards, and look over as far as Dongola. For a long way above the Second Cataract, there are no monuments. This is probably owing to the river not being navigable there, so that there were no trading stations. There are obvious reasons why temples and other monuments should rise where commerce halts, where men congregate, and desire protection of person and property, and exercise their social passions and affections. So, for the twenty-five days' journey where the river is impracticable, there are no monuments. Then some occur of a rather modern date : and far beyond them, —up in Dongola,—we come upon traces of a time when men were trafficking, building and worshipping, while yet the plain of Thebes lay bare. To this point did the sovereigns of Memphis and of This extend their hand of power ; erecting statues as memorials

* Herod. II. 125.

of themselves, and by their subjects, trading in such articles of use and luxury as they derived from the east. While the Ethiopian subjects of these early Pharaohs were building up that character for piety and probity which spread over the world, and found its way into the earliest legends and poems of distant nations, the plain of Thebes still lay wild and bare;—not one stone yet placed upon another.

And now, the time had arrived for the Theban kings to arise, give glory to the close of the Old Monarchy, and preserve the national name and existence during the thousand years of foreign domination which were to follow. In the course of reigns at which we have now arrived, El-Karnac began to show its massive buildings, and the plain of Thebes to present temptation to a foreign conqueror.

We have now arrived at the end of the First great Period of ascertained Egyptian history;—a period supposed, from astronomical calculation and critical research, to comprehend 889 years.—A dark and humiliating season was now drawing on.

Considering the great wealth and power of the kings now reigning at Memphis and at Thebes, we are obliged to form a high opinion of the strength of the Shepherd Race who presently subdued Egypt. Whence they came; no one seems to know,—further than that it was somewhere from the East. Whether they were Assyrians, as some have conjectured, or the Phœnicians who were encroaching upon the Delta at a subsequent time, or some third party, we cannot learn, the Egyptians having always, as is natural, kept silence about them. The pride of the

Egyptians was in their agriculture and commerce ; and to be conquered by a pastoral people, whose business lay anywhere among the plains of the earth, rather than in the richly-tilled, narrow valley of the Nile, was a hard stroke of adversity for them. So, in their silence, all that we know of their strong enemy is that the Shepherd Race took Memphis, put garrisons in all the strong places of Egypt, made the kings of Memphis and Thebes tributary to them, and held their empire for 929 years : that is, for a time equal to that which extends from the death of our King Alfred to our own ; a long season of subjugation, from which it is wonderful that the native Egyptian race should have revived. This dark season, during which the native kings were not absolutely dethroned, but depressed and made tributary, is commonly called the Middle Monarchy. It is supposed to extend from B.C. 2754 to B.C. 1825.

About this time, a visitor arrived in Egypt, and remained a short while, whose travels are interesting to us, and whose appearance affords a welcome rest to the imagination, after its wanderings in the dim regions of these old ages. The richest of the Phœnicians who found themselves restricted for room and pasturage by the numbers of Chaldeans who moved westwards into Syria, found their way, through Arabia, to the abundance of corn which Lower Egypt afforded. Among these was Abraham, a man of such wealth and distinction that he and his followers were entertained as guests at Memphis, and his wife was lodged in the palace of the king. He must have looked up at the Pyramids, and learned some of the particulars which we, following on his traces, long in vain to know :—how

they were reared, and for what purpose precisely; and perhaps many details of the progress of the work. It is true, these pyramids had then stood somewhere about 1500 years: the builders, tens of thousands in number, had slept for many centuries in their graves; the kings who had reared them lay embalmed in the stillness of ages, and the glory of a supremacy which had passed away; and these edifices had become so familiar to the eyes of the inhabitants, that they were like natural features of the landscape: but as Abraham walked round those vast bases, and looked up at the smooth pictured surfaces of their sides, he might have had explained to him those secrets of ancient civilisation which we seek to pry into in vain.

We now come to the brilliant Third Period.

The Theban kings had been growing in strength for some time; and at length they were able to rise up against the Shepherd Race, and expel them from Memphis, and afterwards from their stronghold, Abaris. On the surrender of this last place, the enemy were permitted to march out of the country in safety,—the number of their men being recorded as 240,000.—The period of 1300 years now entered upon was the grandest of Egyptian history,—if, we may add, the Sesostris of old renown was, as some recent students have supposed, the Ramases II. of this Period. Some high authorities, as Lepsius and Bunsen, believe Sesostris to have belonged to the old Monarchy. However this may be, all agree that the deeds of many heroes are attributed to the one who now bears the name of Sesostris; and the achievements of Ramases the Great are quite enough to glorify his age, whether he had a

predecessor like himself or not. Of these achievements I shall say nothing here, as they will come before us quite often enough in our study of the temples. Suffice it that the empire of Egypt was extended by conquest southwards to Abyssinia; westwards over Lybia; northwards over Greece; and eastwards beyond the banks of the Ganges. The rock statues and stelæ of Sesostris may yet be seen in countries far apart, but within this range: his Babylonian captives were employed on some of the great edifices we have seen, and were afterwards permitted to build a city for themselves near the point of the Delta: and the tributary kings and chiefs of all the conquered countries were required to come up to Egypt once a year, to pay homage by drawing the conqueror's chariot, in return for which they received gifts and favour. The kings of Lower Egypt appear to have declined about this period; if even they were not tributary to those of Upper Egypt. Of these kings, one was he who received Joseph into favour,* and made him his prime minister; and another was he who afterwards "knew not Joseph." Of Joseph's administration of the affairs of Lower Egypt we know more than of the rule of any other minister of the Pharaohs. I have walked upon the mounds which cover the streets of Memphis, through which Joseph rode, on occasion of his investiture, and where the king's servants ran before him, to bid the people bow the knee. And when at Heliopolis, I was on the spot where he married his wife,—the daughter of the priest and governor of On, afterwards Heliopolis.

* Supposed about B.C. 1706.

It was in the early part of this Third Period of the Egyptian Monarchy that Cecrops is supposed (fable being here mingled with history) to have led a colony from Saïs, and to have founded the kingdom of Athens,* beginning here the long series of obligations that Greece, and through Greece Rome and the world, have been under to Egypt. It is almost overpowering to the imagination to contemplate the vast antiquity of the Egyptian empire, already above two thousand years, in the day when Cecrops was training his band of followers, to lead them in search of a place whereon to build Athens;—in a day long preceding that when Ceres was wandering about the earth in search of her daughter.

It was about this time that a still more important event than even the founding of Athens had taken place. We all know how a certain Egyptian lady went out one day to bathe, and what was found by her maidens in a rushy spot on the banks of the Nile. That lady was the daughter of one of the Pharaohs of Memphis, at a time, (as some think) shortly before the union on one head of the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt. When she brought home the child found among the rushes, she little thought that that infant head was to become the organ of a wisdom that should eclipse the glory of Sesostris, and mainly determine the spiritual destinies of the human race, for a longer course of centuries than even Egypt had yet seen.

When the Shepherd Kings and their army were driven out of Egypt, many of their people remained as slaves, and were employed on the public works. The

* B.C. 1556.

Hebrews were also thus employed;—latterly on the fortifications of Thoum and Heliopolis; and the Egyptians confounded the two races of aliens in a common hatred. From the prevalence of leprosy among the Hebrews, and other causes, they were considered an unclean people; and they were sent by the Pharaoh of their day, under the warning of the priests, to live by themselves in the district allotted to them. Whether the Pharaoh who opposed the departure of this army of slaves was Thothmes III., or his son, Amunoph II., or some later king, is undetermined; but it is believed on high authority that it was Thothmes III.,* and that he reigned many years after the Exodus. The date of the Exodus is agreed upon as about B. C. 1491, whoever was the Pharaoh reigning at the time. There is no assertion in the Mosaic narrative, that Pharaoh himself was lost in the Red Sea,† nor that the whole of his host perished: nor is there any allusion in the Song of Moses to the death of the sovereign: and some of the Hebrew traditions declare‡ that Pharaoh survived, and extended his conquests afterwards into Assyria. Thus the supposition that the Israelites marched out in an early year of the reign of this monarch is not irreconcilable with his having reigned thirty-nine years, as Egyptian history declares that he did. Manetho mentions their numbers to have been eighty thousand when they were sent to live by themselves: and it is curious on this account, and on some others, to find the number assigned by the Mosaic history so high as

* Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians, I. p. 54.

† Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians, I. p. 55.

‡ Pictorial History of Palestine, I. p. 186.

six hundred thousand, besides women and children. Even if we suppose a proportion of these to have been their fellow-slaves of the Shepherd Race, who, being confounded with the Hebrews by their masters, took this opportunity of leaving the country, it gives us a high idea of the power and population of Egypt in those days that such a body could be abstracted from the working class of the country, and leave behind a sufficient force for the achievement of such wars and arts as we know were prosecuted after their departure.*

As our chief interest in Egypt was till lately from its being the scene of the early life of the Hebrew nation, we are apt to look for records of the Hebrews on the monuments wherever we go. I am convinced that none have been found relating to their connexion with Egypt:—none relating to them at all, till the long subsequent time when Jerusalem was conquered by Sheshonk (Shishak). In my opinion, it would be more surprising if there had been such records than that there are not. There is nothing in the presence of a body of slaves to require or suggest a monumental record, unless those slaves were made so by conquest, and had previously been a nation. The Hebrews were not a nation, and had no dream of being so till Moses began the mighty work of making them one. When they had a confirmed national existence; when their

* It is probable that no one will contend for the accuracy of the numbers as they stand in the Mosaic history; for, taking the longest term assigned for the residence of the Hebrews in Egypt,—430 years,—and supposing the most rapid rate of increase known in the world, their numbers could not have amounted to one-third of that assigned.

great King Solomon had married into the line of the Pharaohs, and their national interests came into collision with those of Egypt, we find them, among other nations, in the train of the captives of Sheshonk, on the walls of El Karnac. Some Hebrew names among those of the Egyptian months,* and a sprinkling of Hebrew words in the Coptic language (which might have found their way there afterwards) are, I believe, the only traceable memorials in Egypt of the residence of the Israelites.

According to Pliny, one of the Ramases was on the throne of Egypt when Troy was taken: and within thirty years of that time, King Solomon married a daughter of one of the Pharaohs.—How great Thebes had long been is clear from the mention of Upper Egypt in Homer, who says, perhaps truly enough in one sense, that it was the birthplace of some of the Greek gods; and that its inhabitants were so wise as to be favourites, and even hosts of those gods. It was with these wise Thebans (then one with the Ethiopians) that Jupiter and his family were supposed by the Greeks to be making holiday, when out of reach, as it seemed, of the prayers of the besiegers of Troy.—The Theban family of monarchs, however, was by this time declining in power; and after a century or two of weakness, they were displaced by stronger men from a higher station up the river; and Egypt was governed by princes from the hitherto subordinate province of Ethiopia. In three generations, Thebes ceased to be the capital of Egypt; and the seat of government was removed to Saïs in the Delta. This event happened

* Sharpe's History of Egypt, p. 37.

nearly 700 years B. C. From this time, we have the advantage of certainty of dates, within, at least, the range of a few months. We have come down to the record of Babylonian eclipses, and the skies light up the history of the earth.

It was in this age that the downfall of old Egypt was provided for by the introduction of Greek influences into the Delta, at the time when the seat of sovereignty was there. While the national throne stood at Thebes, the religion, philosophy, learning and language of the ancient race could be little, if at all, affected by what was doing in other parts of the world: but when the Thebaid became a province, and the metropolis was open to visits from the voyagers of the Mediterranean, the exclusively Egyptian character began to give way; and while Egypt furnished, through these foreigners, the religion, philosophy, and art of the whole civilised world, she was beginning to lose the nationality which was her strength. Nechepsus, one of the kings of Saïs, was a learned priest, and wrote on astronomy. His writings were in the Greek language. The kings of Saïs now began to employ Greek mercenaries. Psammitichus I. not only employed as soldiers large numbers of Ionian and Carian immigrants, but, as Herodotus tells us,* committed to them the children of the Egyptians, to be taught Greek, and gave them lands and other advantages for settlement in the Delta. Of course, this was displeasing to his native subjects, and the national unity was destroyed. One curious circumstance occurred under this king, which reveals

* Herod. II. 154.

much of the popular temper, and which has left some remarkable traces behind it,—as will be seen in my next chapter. Psammitichus placed three armies of Egyptians on the three frontiers of Egypt.* That on the southern frontier, stationed at Elephantine, grew impatient, after a neglect of three years. Finding their petitions for removal unanswered, and their pay not forthcoming, they resolved to emigrate, and away they marched, up the river, as far beyond Meroë as Meroë is beyond Elephantine,—and there lands were given them, where their descendants were found, three centuries afterwards. The king himself pursued and overtook them, and endeavoured by promises and prayers, and by appeals to them not to forsake their gods and their homes, to induce them to return. They told him however that they would make homes for themselves, and marched on. Their numbers being, as Herodotus tells, two hundred and forty thousand men, it was impossible to constrain them. The king took with him a force of Greek mercenaries, whom he sent some way, as we shall see by and by, after the deserters; but it appears that he did not go higher than Elephantine.

While we thus see how Egypt became weakened in preparation for downfall, it is pretty clear, on the other hand, how the process went on by which the rest of the world became enlightened by her knowledge, and ripened by her wisdom.

About thirty years after Saïs became the capital of Egypt, the first of the Wise Men of Greece, Thales, was

* Herod. II. 30.

born. He went to Egypt to improve his knowledge,—and remarkable indeed was the knowledge he brought away.—He was the first Greek who predicted an eclipse. He forewarned his Ionian countrymen of that celebrated eclipse which, when it happened, suspended the battle between the Medes and Lydians.—It was Thales, we are told, who, after his return from Egypt, fixed the sun's orbit, or determined the duration of the year to be 365 days. It was in Egypt that he obtained his knowledge of Geometry : and he it was who imparted, on his return, the great discovery that the angle in a semicircle is always a right angle. In Egypt he ascertained the elevation of the pyramids by observing the shadows of measurable objects in relation to their height. His connexion with Egypt gives us a new interest in his theories of creation or existence. He gave the name of Life to every active principle, as we should call it ; and in this sense, naturally declared that the universe was "full of gods." At the same time, he is reported by tradition to have said, "The most ancient of things existing is God ; for he is uncreated : the most beautiful thing is the universe, for it is God's creation." Men in Greece wondered at him for saying what would not surprise even the common men in Egypt in his day, that Death does not differ from Life.

About the same time came a sober thinking man from Greece to Egypt, to exchange a cargo of olive-oil from Athens for Egyptian corn and luxuries from the East. After this thoughtful man had done his commercial business, he remained to see what he could of the country and people. He conversed much with a

company of priests at Saïs, who taught him, as Plato tells us, much history, and some geography, and evidently not a little of law. His countrymen profited on his return by his studies at Saïs; for this oil-merchant was Solon the Law-Maker. One of his laws is assigned immediately to an Egyptian origin; that by which every man was required to give an account to the magistrate of his means of livelihood. As for the geography which Solon might learn at Saïs, there is the testimony of Herodotus that King Necho, the predecessor of Psammitichus I., sent a maritime expedition by the Red Sea, which circumnavigated Africa, and returned by the Pillars of Hercules.* Plato tells us † that one of Solon's priestly friends, Sonchis, told him of some Atlantic isles, beyond the Pillars of Hercules, which were larger than Asia and Africa united. This sets one thinking whether the Egyptians had not some notion of the existence of America.

Within seventy years or so of Solon's visit to Egypt, a truly great man followed on his traces. Pythagoras was unsatisfied with all that could be learned from teachers at home,—from Thales downwards,—and went to Egypt to study philosophy and morals. He was introduced to king Amasis at Saïs by letters from Polycrates. There is no saying how much of the philosophy of Pythagoras is derived and how much original: nor, of that which is derived, how much he owed to intercourse with the sages of Chaldæa and

* Herod. IV. 42. A strong indication of the truth of this story is found in the simple remark of Herodotus that he cannot believe the navigators in one of their assertions,—that they had the sun on their right hand.

† In Critias.

other countries. But I think no one who has felt an interest in the study of what is known of the Pythagorean philosophy, can fail to be reminded of the philosopher at every step in those chambers of the tombs at Thebes which relate to Life and Death subjects. Where the paintings treat of the constitution of things, the regions which the soul of Man may inhabit, and the states through which it may pass, one feels that Pythagoras might have been the designer of them, if he were not a learner from them. I strongly suspect it would be found, if the truth could be known, that more of the spiritual religion, the abstruse philosophy, and the lofty ethics and political views of the old Egyptians have found their way into the general mind of our race through Pythagoras than by any or all other channels, except perhaps the institutions of Moses, and the speculations of Plato. Some traditions, among the many which exist in relation to this, the first man who assumed the title of Philosopher, report him to have lived twenty years in the Nile valley ; and then to have been carried off prisoner to Babylon, on the Persian invasion of Egypt.

This brings us near to the close of the great Third Period of Egyptian history. Before the Persians came, however, Hecataeus of Miletus, mentioned before as the earliest historical authority, went up to Thebes. I have spoken already of what he saw and heard there.

Cyrus was meanwhile meditating a renewal of the old wars between Babylon and Egypt, which had formerly been all to the glory of the Pharaohs. Before his death, Cyrus took Cyprus from the Egyptians : and he bequeathed the task of conquering Egypt itself to

his son Cambyses. — The wise and fortunate king Amasis died before Cambyses reached Egypt: and with him, the Third Period of Egyptian history may be said to have expired; for his son Psammenitus could make so little resistance, that he had completed his surrender to the foolish and cruel conqueror before he had been on the throne six months.

We have now reached the mournful close of the great Third Period of Egyptian history; and there is little to dwell on in the succeeding two hundred years, when Egypt was a province of Persia. Upper Egypt never rose again. If there had been any strength or spirit left in her, she might have driven out Cambyses; for his folly left him open to almost any kind or degree of resistance from man or nature. Nature did her utmost to avenge the conquered people: but they could not help themselves. Cambyses set out for Ethiopia with his Persians, leaving his Greek troops to defend the Delta: but he made no provision for his long march southwards; and his soldiers, after exhausting the country, and killing their beasts of burden for food, began to slay one another, casting lots for one victim in ten of their number.* The army of fifty thousand men, whom he had raised in the valley, in order to conquer the Desert,—that is, to take the Oases, and burn the temple of the Oracle,—were never heard of more. Whether they perished by thirst, or were overtaken by the sand, was never known. So, all that the conqueror could do was to lay waste Thebes, where it appears there was now no one to stay his hand. He

* Herod. III. 25.

carried off its treasures of gold, silver and ivory, broke open and robbed the Tombs of the Kings, threw down what he could of the temple buildings, and hewed in pieces such of the colossal statues as were not too strong for the brute force of his army. It was then, if Pausanias says true, that the Vocal statue, the easternmost of the Pair, was shattered and overthrown from the waist: after which, however, it still gave out its gentle music to the morning sun. On the return of Cambyses to Memphis,* he found the people rejoicing in the investiture of a new bull Apis, which had been found qualified to succeed the one which had died. He was angry at any rejoicing while he was baffled and unfortunate; asked how it was that they showed no joy when he was there before, and so much now when he had lost the chief part of his army; put to death the magistrates who informed him of the occasion of the festival; with his own hand stabbed the bull, and ordered the priests to be scourged.† Here again he broke open the tombs, and desecrated the temples. Meantime, the valley swarmed with strangers, who came in embassy from every part of the wide Persian dominion, to offer congratulation and magnificent presents, on the conquest of Egypt.—Yet this new province never became an easy possession. One revolt followed another; and the valley was a scene of almost continual conflict during the two hundred years of its nominal subservience to Persia. Its conquest by Cambyses took place in 525 B.C.

It was only during an occasional revolt that any one

* Herod. III. 27.

† Herod. III. 29.

from Athens could set foot in Egypt: for the great war between the Greeks and Persians was now going on. Anaxagoras was born 500 B.C., and he was therefore ten years old at the time of the battle of Marathon; and nineteen when that of Salamis was fought. But when he was forty years of age, Egypt became accessible for four years, by means of a revolt. During this time, though the Persians were never dislodged from Memphis, both Lower and Upper Egypt appeared to have become independent; and many Greeks, bent on the advancement of learning, and Anaxagoras among them, hastened to the Egyptian schools. Anaxagoras's work on the Nile has perished with his other writings: and there is no saying how much of his philosophy he derived from the teachings of the Egyptian priests: but there is a striking accordance between the opinions which he is variously reported to have held, and for which he is believed to have suffered banishment, and those which constituted part of the philosophy of Egypt. Wherever we turn, in tracing the course of ancient philosophy, we meet the priests of Egypt: and it really appears as if the great men of Greece and other countries had little to say on the highest and deepest subjects of human inquiry till they had studied at Memphis, or Saïs, or Thebes or Heliopolis. Here was the master of Socrates,* the originator of some of his most important opinions, and the great mover of his mind, studying in Egypt; and we shall hereafter

* Proclus says that Socrates, as well as Plato, learned the doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul from the Egyptians. If so, his great master, Anaxagoras, was probably,—almost certainly,—the channel through which he received it.

find the great pupil of Socrates, and the interpreter of his mind, Plato, dwelling in the same school, for so long a time, it is thought, as to show in what reverence he held it.

Soon after Anaxagoras came Herodotus. We may be thankful that among the Greeks who visited Egypt, there was one whose taste was more for matter-of-fact than for those high abstract inquiries which are not popularly included under that name: for the scientific and philosophical writings of his countrymen are, for the most part, lost, while the travels of Herodotus remain, as lively and fresh in their interest as ever. We may mourn that the others are gone; but we must rejoice that these are preserved. Here, at least, we obtain what we have longed for in the whole course of our study of the early Egyptian periods; records of the sayings and doings of the priests, and of the destinies of the people; pictures of the appearance of the great Valley and of its inhabitants; and details of their lives, customs, manners, history and opinions. The temptation is strong to present again here, to fill up and illuminate this sketch of the history of old Egypt, some of the material of Herodotus: but his books lie within reach of every hand: and I will use them no further than is necessary to the illustration of what I myself observed in my study of the Monuments.

Within a hundred years of Herodotus came Plato. It may be questioned whether this visit of Plato to Egypt be not one of the most important events which have occurred in the history of the human mind.—The first thing that strikes us is how much there must have been to be learned in Egypt at this time, since Plato,

his friend Eudoxus the astronomer, and Chrysippus the physician, all came—(such men, and from such a distance!) to study in the schools of Heliopolis. It is related, and was believed in his own age, that Plato lived thirteen years at Heliopolis: and when Strabo was there, 350 years afterwards, he was shown the house where Plato and Eudoxus lived and studied.—Plato had met Socrates, it is believed, at the age of nineteen. After having learned what he could of him, and sustained his death, and been compelled for political reasons to leave Athens, he had gone to Megara, and joined the school of Euclid,*—also a pupil of Socrates, and one well qualified to cherish what Socrates had sown in the mind of Plato. Though this school was considered one of doubt and denial, its ultimate doctrine was that the Supreme Good is always the same and unchangeable. Thus trained and set thinking, Plato came to Egypt, and sat where Moses had sat, at the feet of the priests, gaining, as Moses had gained, an immortal wisdom from their lips. The methods of learning of these two men, and their acquisitions differed according to the differing characteristics of their minds. Each took from his teachers what he could best appropriate. Moses was spiritualised to a wonderful degree, considering his position and race; but his surpassing eminence was as a redeeming legislator. Plato had deeply-considered views on political matters; but his surpassing eminence was as a spiritual philosopher. Moses redeemed a race of slaves, made men of them, organised them into a society, and constituted them a nation; while Plato did only theoretical work

* Not the geometrician.

of that kind,—enough to testify to the political philosophy of Egypt, but not to affect the condition of Greece. But Plato taught the Egyptian doctrine (illustrated on the tombs ages before, and, as Proclus declares, derived by Plato from Egypt) of the Immortality of the Soul, and rewards and punishments in an after-life. This was what Plato taught that Moses did not. The great old Egyptian doctrine, extending back, as the Book of Genesis shows us, as far as the Egyptian traditions reached—the great doctrine of a Divine Moral Government, was the soul alike of the practical legislation of Moses and the speculative philosophy of Plato; and this is, as it seems to us now, their great common qualification for bearing such a part as each does in the constitution of the prevalent Christianity.—We shall have to return to this hereafter, when we have seen more of the Egyptian priesthood. Meantime, I may observe that unless there is other evidence that Plato visited the Jews than the amount of Judaism in his writings, it does not seem necessary to suppose such a visit. If he passed thirteen years beside that fountain of wisdom where Moses dwelt till his manhood, it is not extraordinary that they should have great Ideas in common. The wonder would be if they had not. The intellectual might of Moses seems to show that the lapse of intervening ages had not much changed the character of the schools: and the result on the respective minds of the two students may have been much the same as if they had sat side by side in bodily presence, as they ever will do in the reason of all who faithfully contemplate the operation of the Christian religion on the minds of men, from the beginning till now.—That

Plato derived and adopted much from his predecessors among Greek philosophers is very evident: and from Pythagoras above all. But many of these Greek philosophers had been trained in Egypt; and especially, as we have seen, Pythagoras, whose abstract ideas would appear to be displayed in a course of illustration on the walls of the Theban tombs, if we did not know that these tombs, with all their pictured mysteries, had been closed many centuries before the philosopher was born.

During all our review of the old Egyptians, we have not yet considered who they were. Of this there is little to say. It is useless to call them Copts; because all we can say of the Copts is that we must suppose them to be of the same race originally as the old Egyptians: and this throws no light on the derivation of either. Speaking of the origin of the Colchians, Herodotus says that the Egyptians believed them to be descended from followers of Sesostris; and that he thought this probable from (among other reasons) their being black, and having curly hair.* This blackness was probably only a relative term; for not only do we find the Nubians at this day, with their strong resemblance to the portraits in the tombs, of a dark bronze, but in the tombs there is a clear distinction between the absolute black of negro captives and other dark complexions. On these walls, the colour given to figures generally is a dark red. Where there is a bluish black, or neutral tint on the faces, it is distinctive merely of the priestly caste. The women are sometimes painted yellow; and so are certain strangers, supposed to be Asiatic or European. It is a curious circumstance,

* Herod. II. 104.

related by Sir W. Gell, that in the Tarquinian tombs in Etruria, all the men have the dark red complexion found in the Egyptian tombs. This rather tends to confirm the impression that the red colour may be symbolical, like the blue for the priests, and the yellow for the women. On the whole, it is thought probable that the old Egyptian complexion was of the dark bronze of the Nubians of the present day.—Herodotus says that, except the Lybians, no people were so blessed in point of health and temperament :* and he repeatedly records traits of their cleanliness, and nicety with regard to food and habits. It does not appear that they were insensible or reconciled to the plague of indigenous insects, as natives usually are,—and especially Africans ; for he tells us of their sleeping under nets to avoid the mosquitoes.† Their dress was of linen, with fringes round the legs, ‡—and over this they wore a cloak of white wool, which must be laid aside before they entered the temples ;—or the tomb ; for it was not permitted to bury in woollen garments.—Every man had but one wife :§ and the women were clearly in that state of freedom which must be supposed to exist where female sovereignty was a matter of course in its turn. Herodotus tells that the women went into the market, and conducted commerce while the men staid at home to weave cloth. || He speaks of them as a serious-minded and most religious people. “ They are very religious,” he says, “ and surpass all men in the worship they render to the gods.” ¶ He tells of their great repugnance to the customs of the Greeks and of all other

* Herod. II. 77.

† Herod. II. 95.

‡ Herod. II. 81.

§ Herod. II. 92.

|| Herod. II. 35.

¶ Herod. II. 37.

men;* and everywhere attests the originality of the Egyptians, and their having given truth, knowledge and customs to others, without having themselves derived from any.

One of the most interesting inquiries to us is about the language of these people. To form any idea of the labours of modern interpreters of the monuments, we must remember that they have not only to read the perfectly singular cipher of these writers on stone, but to find their very language. Of course, the only hope is in the study of the Coptic: and the Coptic became almost a dead language in the twelfth century of our era, and entirely so in the seventeenth, after having been for ages corrupted by the admixture of foreign terms, going on at the same time with the loss of old native ones. Egypt never had any permanent colonies in which her language might be preserved during the ages when one foreign power after another took possession of her valley, and rendered the language of her people compound and corrupt. Without repeating here the long and well-known story of the progress of discovery of the ancient language, it is enough to give the results thus far attained.

The key, not only to the cipher but to the language, was afforded by the discovery of the same inscription written, as the inscription itself declared, in three languages,—the Greek, the Enchorial or ordinary Egyptian writing, and the old sacred character. The most ancient was found to bear a close relation to the Coptic, as then known: a relation probably, as has been observed by a recent writer,† “similar to that

* Herod. II. 91. † Penny Cyclopædia; Article: COPTIC LANGUAGE.

which the Latin does to the Italian, the Zend to the modern Persian, or the Sanscrit to many of the vernacular dialects now spoken in India." This key was applied with wonderful sagacity and ingenuity by Champollion the younger, who proceeded a good deal further than reading the names and titles of the kings and their officers. He ventured upon introducing or deciphering (whichever it may be called) many words not to be found in the later Coptic, except in their supposed roots, nor, of course, anywhere else. The great difficulty is that, the language having, by lapse of ages, lost its original power of grammatical inflexion, a quality which it seems scarcely possible to restore, the relations of ideas in a sentence, which in the more modern Coptic are expressed by auxiliary terms, must be disposed by conjecture, or by doubtful internal comparison and analogy. It is easy to see how thus, while names and titles, and all declaratory terms may be read, when once the alphabet is secured, all beyond must be in a high degree conjectural, at least till the stock of terms is largely increased. The stock is on the increase, however. Champollion made a noble beginning: Dr. Lepsius has corrected him in some important instances; and the Chevalier Bunsen has offered a Lexicon of the old Egyptian language, placing above four hundred words in comparison with the known Coptic. This is a supply which will go a good way in reading the legends on the monuments; by which process, again, we may be helped to more. The very singular nature of the alphabet being once understood, and the beginning of a Lexicon being supplied, there seems reason to hope that the process of

discovery may be carried on by the application of one fresh mind after another to the task which all must see to be as important as any which can occupy the human faculties. Or, if all do not see this, it must be from insufficient knowledge of the facts :—insufficient knowledge of the amount of the records, of their antiquity, and of their general nature. When the traveller gazes at vast buildings covered over in every part with writing ; every architrave, every abacus, every recess and every projection, all the lines of the cornice, and all the intervals of the sculptures, he is overwhelmed with the sense of the immensity of knowledge locked up from him before his eyes. Let those at home imagine the ecclesiastical history of Christendom written up thus on every inch of the surface of its cathedrals, and the civil history of any country, from its earliest times, thus engraved on all its public buildings and palaces, and he may form some conception of what it would be, in regard to mere amount, to be able to read the inscriptions in Egypt. If he is also aware that the religion, philosophy and science of the world for many thousand years, a religion, philosophy, and science which reveal a greater nobleness, depth, and extent, the more they are explored, are recorded there, under our very eyes and hands, he will see that no nobler task awaits any lover of truth and of his race, than that of enabling mankind to read these earliest volumes of its own history.

And the world has no other resource in regard to this object. There is no doubt about the ancient Egyptians having had an extensive written literature : but it is lost. It was shelved when the Greek language

and literature became the fashion in Egypt: and previous circumstances had been unfavourable to the preservation of the rolls of goat and sheep skins, and the subsequent papyri, which contained the best thoughts of the best men of five or six thousand years ago. We may mourn over this;—we must mourn, for it is certain that they knew things that we are yet ignorant of, and that they could do things which we can only wonder at:—but the records are lost, and no man can help it now. There has been later damage too, clearly traceable. We all know how early Christianity was introduced into Egypt: and all who have been there have seen how indefatigable the early Christians were in destroying everything relating to the ancient people and their faith that they could lay their hands on. Again, the Emperor Severus carefully collected the writings which related to the mysteries of the priests, and buried them in the tomb of Alexander. And again, Diocletian ordered all the Egyptian books on alchemy to be destroyed, lest these makers of gold should become too rich to remain dependent on Rome. Thus scarcely a vestige of the ancient writing on destructible substances remains, and the monumental records are our only resource. While we take to heart the terrible loss, let us take to heart also the value of the resource, and search for the charm which may remove the spell of dumbness from these eloquent old teachers. Perhaps the solemn Memnon may yet respond if touched by the warm bright rays of zeal and intelligence; and the great Valley may take up the echoes from end to end. And this is a case where he who gives his labour quickly gives twice. Time is a more

efficient defacer than even the Coptic Christians : and the indefatigable enemy, the Desert, can bury old records on a vaster scale than any Severus. There are rulers bearing sway, too, who are not more enlightened than the mischievous Diocletian.

As for the Egyptian method of recording the language, there were three kinds of writing : the Hieroglyphic, or picture writing ; the Hieratic,—an abridged form of the hieroglyphic, used by the priests for their records ; and the Enchorial, in popular use, which appears to be a still further abridgment of the hieratic, whose signs have flowed into a running hand. Written language is found among the very earliest memorials of this most ancient people.

As for their social organisation, we know more of it than of most particulars concerning them. The most important however in the state appears to have been that of the caste of Priests. The monarch must be of that class. If a member of the next (the military) caste was made king, he must first become a priest.*—Herodotus says that Egyptian society was composed of seven castes ; Plato says six :† Diodorus Siculus says five.‡ The classification of Herodotus is so strange that it is clear that he included under his titles some division of employments which we do not understand. He declares § the seven classes to be the Priests, the Military, the Herdsmen, the Swineherds, the Tradesmen, the Interpreters, and the Pilots and seamen. The classification of Diodorus will help us better. He gives us the Priests, the Military, the Husbandmen, the

* Plutarch. de Is. IX. † In Timæo. ‡ Diod. I. 74. § Herod. II. 164.

Tradesmen and Artificers, and, lowest of all; the Shepherds; and with them the Poulterers, Fishermen and Servants. The division indicates much of the national mind, as I need not point out. We must remember, throughout our study of the monuments, that the priests were not occupied with religion alone. They had possession besides of the departments of politics, law, medicine, science and philosophy. It is curious to speculate on what must have been the division of employments among them, when we read in Herodotus how they partitioned out their art of medicine,—there being among them no general practitioners, as we should say, but physicians of the heart, the lungs, the abdomen; and oculists, dentists, &c.* If such a subdivision was followed out through the whole range of study and practice in all professions, the priestly caste must contain within itself a sufficient diversity to preserve its enlightenment and magnanimity better than we, with our modern view of the tendencies of a system of castes, might suppose.

I have perhaps said enough of this ancient people to prepare for an entrance upon the study of their monuments. The other castes, and a multitude of details of personal and social condition and usage will come before us when we turn to the sculptures and pictures. Before going on to their successors, we may call to mind the grounds which Herodotus assigns for his fulness of detail about the Pharaohs and their people. He says "I shall enlarge further on what concerns Egypt, because it contains more wonders than any other country; and because there is no region besides

* Herod. II. 84.

where one sees so many works which are admirable and beyond expression.”*

Beyond expression indeed are those great works. And do we not know that wherever men's works have a grandeur or beauty beyond expression, the feeling which suggested and inspired them is yet more beyond expression still. O! how happy should I be if I could arouse in others by this book, as I experienced it myself from the monuments, any sense of the depth and solemnity of the IDEAS which were the foundation of the old Egyptian faith! I did not wait till I went to Egypt to remember that the faculty of Reverence is inherent in all men, and that its natural exercise is always to be sympathised with, irrespective of its objects. I did not wait till I went to Egypt to become aware that every permanent reverential observance has some great Idea at the bottom of it, and that it is our business not to deride or be shocked at the method of manifestation, but to endeavour to apprehend the Idea concerned. I vividly remember the satisfaction of ascertaining the ideas that lay at the bottom of those most barbarous South Sea island practices of Human Sacrifice and Cannibalism. If some sympathy in conception and feeling is possible in even this lowest case, how far should we be from contempt or levity in studying the illustrations of Egyptian faith and hope which we find blazoned on works “admirable and beyond expression!” With all Men's tendency to praise the olden time,—to say that the former times are better than these,—we find that it is usually only the wisdom of their own forefathers that they extol;—merely a

* Herod. II. 35.

former mode of holding and acting upon their own existing ideas. They have no such praise for the forefathers of another race, who had other ideas, and acted them out differently. Instead of endeavouring to ascertain the ideas, they revile or ridicule the manifestation, which was never meant to meet their conceptions, and can never be interpreted by them. Thus we, as a society, take upon ourselves to abhor and utterly despise the "Idolatry" of the Egyptians, without asking ourselves whether we comprehend any thing of the principles of Egyptian theology. The children on their stools by our firesides wonder eternally how people so clever could be so silly as to pay homage to crocodiles and cats: and their parents too often agree with them, instead of pointing out that there might be, and certainly were, reasons in the minds of Egyptians which made it a very different thing in them to cherish sacred animals from what it would be in us. Everybody at home talks of the ugly and grotesque character of the Egyptian works of art: and no wonder, if they judge, with English mind and English eyes, from broken specimens in the British Museum. One can only ask them to trust something to the word of travellers who have seen such works in their plenitude, in their own locality and proper connexion. Probably some people in Greece were talking of the ugly and grotesque character of such Egyptian decorations as they might have heard of, while Herodotus was gazing on them on their native soil, and declaring in his own mind, as he afterwards did to the whole world and to all time, that they were "admirable and beyond expression."—I would ask for these

considerations to be borne in mind, not only for the sake of justice to the earliest philosophers of the human race, (as far as we know) but because it is impossible to appreciate the monuments,—I may say impossible to *see* them, —through any other medium than that of a teachable mind, working with a sympathising heart. If any one hesitates to grant me this much, let me ask him whether he would be willing to have the Christian religion judged of, five thousand years hence, by such an one as himself, when its existing forms shall have been long forgotten, and its eternal principles shall be expanded in some yet unknown mode of manifestation? Supposing oblivion to have been by that time as completely wrapped round Catholic and Protestant ritual as round the ceremonial of Egyptian worship, would a Christian be content to have his faith judged of by a careless traveller of another race, who should thrust a way among the buried pillars of our cathedral aisles, and look for superstition in every recess, and idolatry in every chapel; and who, lighting upon some carved fox and goose or grinning mask, should go home and declare that Christianity was made up of what was idolatrous, unideal and grotesque? If he is aware that in our Christianity there is much that will not appear on our cathedrals five thousand years hence, let him only remember that there may be much that is ideal and holy in other faiths which we have not had the opportunity of appreciating. I believe this to be the case with every faith which, from the first appearance of the human race upon our globe, has met and gratified the faculty of Reverence in any considerable number of men. If I did not believe this with regard to the religion and philosophy of the

ancient Egyptians, I must have looked at them merely as a wonderful show, and should certainly have visited them in vain.

Here then we take leave of the Pharaohs and their times ; and, we may say, of their people ; for the spirit of the old Egyptians was gone, and only a lifeless body was left, to be used as it pleased their conquerors. We hear of the brilliant reigns of the Ptolemies, who now succeeded to the Egyptian throne : but theirs was a Greek civilisation, which, though unquestionably derived from Egypt, many centuries before, was now as essentially different from that of the old Egyptians as were the characteristics of the two nations.

We must ever observe that there was no true fusion of the minds of the two races. The Greeks learned and adopted much from the Egyptians : but the Egyptians, instead of adopting from the Greeks, died out. No new god was ever introduced into Egypt : while the Greeks, after having long before derived many of their gods from Egypt, now accommodated their deities to those of the Egyptians, and in an arbitrary and superficial way, adopted the old symbols. There is every reason to believe that the priests, when employed by the Ptolemies to interpret the monuments, fitted their new and compounded ideas to the old symbols, and thus produced a theology and philosophy which any resuscitated Pharaoh would have disavowed. The Greeks took no pains to learn the Egyptian language, or to enter into the old Egyptian mind ; and there is therefore endless confusion in the accounts they have given to the world of the old gods and the old monarchs of the Nile valley. To understand anything of the monuments

of the times we are now entering upon, it will be necessary to bear in mind that the Ptolemies and Cæsars built upon Pharaonic foundations, and in imitation of Pharaonic edifices; but necessarily with such an admixture of Greek and Roman ideas with their Egyptian conceptions as to cause a complete corruption of ancient art. It is necessary never to forget this, or we shall be perpetually misled. We may admire the temples of the Ptolemies and Cæsars as much or as little as we please; but we must remember that they are not Egyptian.

Every country weak enough to need the aid of Greek mercenaries was sure to become, ere long, Greek property. It was so with Persia, and with its province, Egypt. The event was hastened by the desire of the Egyptians to be quit of their Persian masters. Alexander the Great was the conqueror, as every body knows. He chose his time when the chief part of the Persian forces of Egypt was absent,—sent to fight the Greeks in Asia Minor. When once Alexander had set foot in Pelusium, the rest was easy; for the towns opened their gates to him with joy; and he had only to march to Heliopolis and then to Memphis. He gave his countenance as well as he knew how to the old worship, restoring the temples and honouring the symbols of the gods at Memphis, and marching to the Oasis of Amun, to present gifts to the chief deity of the Egyptians, and to claim to be his son. It was on his way there, by the coast, that he saw in passing the harbour where Alexandria now stands, and perceived its capabilities. He ordered the improvement of the harbour, and the building of the city which would have

immortalised his name, if he had done nothing else. This visit of Alexander the Great to Egypt took place 332 B.C. He left orders that the country should be governed by its own laws, and that its religion should be absolutely respected. This was wise and humane; and no doubt we owe some of our knowledge of more ancient times to this conservative principle of Alexander's government. But he was not practically sustained by his deputies; and he died eight years after his visit to Egypt.—His successor gave the government of Egypt into the hands of Ptolemy, who called himself the son of Lagus, but was commonly believed to be an illegitimate son of Philip of Macedon. In seventeen years he became king; and with him begins the great line of the Ptolemies, of whom sixteen reigned in succession for 275 years, till the witch Cleopatra let the country go into the hands of the Romans, to become a Roman province, in 30 B.C.

It was under the government of the first Ptolemy that Greek visitors again explored the Nile valley as high as Thebes, and higher. Hecataeus of Abdera was one of these travellers; and a great traveller he was; for, if Diodorus Siculus tells us truly, he once stood on Salisbury Plain, and saw there the great temple of the Sun which we call Stonehenge: * and he certainly stood on the plain of Thebes, and saw the great temple of the Sun there. The priests had recovered their courage, under the just rule of the Greeks, and had brought out the gold and silver and other treasures of the temples which had been carefully hidden from the Persians. Thebes however was almost dead by this

* Sharpe's History of Egypt, p. 146.

time; and its monuments were nearly all which a stranger had to see. We are glad to know that the records of the priests told of forty-seven tombs existing in the Valley of Kings' Sepulchres, of which seventeen had at that time been discovered under their concealment of earth, and laid open. Some of these, and some fresh ones, have been explored in our own days; but it is an animating thing to believe that there were at least forty-seven originally; and that many yet remain, untouched since they were closed on the demise of the Pharaohs. Whose will be the honour of laying them open?—not in the Cambyzes spirit of rapine; but in all honour and reverence, in search of treasures which neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves carry away;—a treasure of light out of the darkened place, and of knowledge out of that place where usually no device or knowledge is found!

We are grieved now to lose the old Egyptian names: but at this time they naturally become exchanged for Greek. On becomes Heliopolis. This becomes Abydos. Thebes (called in the Bible No Ammen,) becomes Diospolis Magna. Pilak becomes Philæ. Petpieh is Aphroditopolis, (the city of Athor). Even the country itself, from being called Khem (answering to Ham in the Bible), is henceforth known as *Ægyptus*.

In the reign of the second Ptolemy lived a writer of uncommon interest and importance to us now:—Manetho, the Egyptian priest. We have only fragments of the writings of Manetho; but they are of great and immediate value to us;—fragments of the history of Egypt, which he wrote at the command of Ptolemy Philadelphus. He wrote in Greek, of course,

deriving his information from the inscriptions in the temples. What would not we give now for his knowledge of the Egyptian language! and what would we not give to have his works complete! His abode was at that great seat of learning where Moses got his lore,—Heliopolis. He is the very man we want,—to stand on the ridge of time, and tell us who are below, what was doing in the depths of the old ages. He did so stand; and he did fully tell what he saw: but his words are gone to the four winds, and but a few unconnected declarations have reached us. We have a list of old kings from him: and Josephus has, by extracting, preserved some passages of his account of the Hebrews when in Egypt: but Josephus, in his unscrupulous vanity, wishing to make out that his nation were descended from the Shepherd Kings, puts certain words of his own into Manetho's mouth, thus impairing our trust in the poor extracts we have. It appears, and should be remembered, that the Egyptian records make no mention of the Hebrews; and that what Manetho told of them must therefore be derived from other, and probably inferior sources. His list of kings is preserved in some early Christian writers: but the difficulty has been how to use it, and how far to trust it. I must not enter here upon the story, however interesting, of the fluctuations of the credit of Manetho. Suffice it that all recent discoveries have directly tended to establish his character, as an able and conscientious historian. The names he gives have been found inscribed in temples and tombs; and even, latterly, in the Pyramids: and the numerous and nameless incidental notices which occur in the study of

ancient monuments have, in this instance, gone to corroborate the statements of Manetho. As the monuments are a confirmation of his statements, so are his statements a key to the monuments: and with this intimation of unbounded obligations to Manetho, we must leave him.

One event which happened in the reign of the second Ptolemy we must just refer to, as it is connected with the chronological questions which make up so much of the interest of the history of Egypt. The Jews then in Egypt were emancipated by this Ptolemy; and they employed their influence with him in obtaining, by his countenance, a good Greek translation of their Scriptures. By communication with the High Priest at Jerusalem, there came about an appointment of seventy qualified men who translated the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, and presented the world with the version called the Septuagint. The chronology of this work differs widely from that given by the Samaritan and Hebrew versions; the Septuagint assigning between Adam and Abraham, nearly 1400 years more than the Hebrew; and so on. For a long course of time, the learned and religious world believed that the discrepancy between the Septuagint and (so-called) Mosaic histories was ascribable to forgery on the part of the Alexandrian Jews. But now that chronological evidence is flowing in from other sources, the judgment of biblical scholars is becoming favourable to the Septuagint computation. Of course, it becomes at the same time more accordant with the recorded history of Egypt.

In the reign of the third Ptolemy lived Eratosthenes,

—a truly great scholar and wise man,—called the second Plato, and also the second of the first man in every science. He was a Greek, understanding Egyptian: and he wrote a history of Egypt in correction of that of Manetho. Their statements, their lists of kings, appear at first sight irreconcilable. This is not the place in which to give an account of the difficulty. It is enough to say that the attention of scholars has been employed upon it to good purpose; and that it may be hoped that two men, reasonably believed so trustworthy, will be found, when we can understand them, to have told the same story, and to have supplied us with new knowledge by the very difference in their way of telling it.

One great event must be noticed before we go on from the dominion of the Ptolemies to that of Rome. The Ptolemies degenerated, as royal races are apt to do; and after a few of their reigns, the Egyptians became as heartily tired of their Greek rulers as they had been of the Persian. In the time of the eighth and ninth sovereigns of this line, Thebes rebelled, and maintained a long resistance against the authority and forces of Ptolemy Lathyrus. The temples were stout citadels, in which the besieged could seclude themselves: and they held them long. When Ptolemy Lathyrus prevailed at last, he made dreadful havock at Thebes. Cambyses had done wonders in the way of destruction: but Lathyrus far exceeded him. As one walks over the plain of Thebes, whose final overthrow dates from this conflict, one's heart sickens among the ruins made by the Persian, the Greek and the Earthquake. To the last of these, one submits quietly, though mournfully,

as to a Fate: but those who do not regard men as necessary agents,—agents of an exact necessity in human history,—may find their spirits rising in resentment against the long buried invaders, as the spirits of the Thebans rose in resentment while they looked out upon their besiegers from the loopholes of their lofty propyla. This greatest and last act of devastation took place 88 B.C.; fifty-eight years before Egypt became a Roman province.

About thirty years before this annexation, Diodorus Siculus was in Egypt. He probably witnessed the beginning of the building of the temple of Dendera. He saw much religious ceremonial, which it is curious to read of, though there is no saying how far it remained true to the old ideas in which it originated. The testimony of Diodorus as to what happened in his own time is of course more valuable than his essays in the ancient history: but the latter are interesting in their way, as showing what were the priestly traditions current in the last days of the Ptolemies.

As our object in this rapid view of Egyptian history is to obtain some clearness of ideas in preparation for looking at the monuments, we need not go into any detail of the times subsequent to the building of Egyptian monuments or of the times of those Romans who erected some temples, but whose history is familiar to everybody. I need only say that after the death of the last Cleopatra and her son Cæsarion, in 30 B.C., Egypt was annexed to the Roman dominions for seven hundred years. At the end of that period, the ruler of Egypt had enough to do to keep off Persian aggression. He bought off the Arabs,—a stronger enemy,—

for a time ; but the great conqueror Amrou marched in triumphant from his capture of Damascus and Jerusalem, and, after some struggle and mischance, took the great cities of Egypt, and sent the libraries of Alexandria to heat the baths of that city ; for which purpose, it is said that they lasted six months.

One of the first visitors to Egypt after its annexation to Rome was Strabo, who went up the banks of the Nile with the Prefect, as far as Aswán, and has left a full and careful account of what he saw. He enlarges on Alexandria, at that time a most magnificent city, while Thebes was a village, interspersed with colossal ruins. Memphis was still great, ranking next to Alexandria : but Heliopolis was sunk, and almost gone. Its schools were closed ; but the memory of them remained, on the spot, as well as afar : for the house was shown where Plato and Eudoxus lived and studied. Would it were there still ! At present, there is nothing left visible of Heliopolis but its obelisk, and a circuit of mounds. Strabo thought the place almost deserted in his time : but what a boon it would be to us to see what was before his eyes, within a few years of the Christian era !

Here, then, we stop ; at a period which we have been wont to consider ancient, but which, in regard to our object, is so modern as to have no further interest or purpose which need detain us.

We now proceed to the monuments.

CHAPTER X.

ABOO-SIMBIL.—EGYPTIAN CONCEPTIONS OF THE GODS.

THE temples of Aboo-Simbil are both of the time of Ramases II.;—in the earlier part of the great Third Period. Nothing more interesting than these temples is to be found beyond the limits of Thebes.

I went up to the smaller temple early in the morning. Of the six statues of the façade, the two in the centre represent Athor, whose calm and gentle face is surmounted by the usual crown,—the moon contained within the cow's horns. On entering the portal in the rock, I found myself in a hall where there was plenty to look at, though the fires lighted by the Arabs have blackened the walls in some places, and the whole is, as I need not say, very old,—nearly 1400 B.C.—This entrance hall is supported by six square pillars, all of which bear the head of Athor on the front face of their capitals, the other three faces being occupied with sculptures, once gaily painted, and still showing blue, red and yellow colours. On the walls here were the men of the old military caste, in their defensive armour;—a sort of cuirass of chain armour,—red links on a yellow ground: and their brethren the civilians, in red frocks: and the women in tight yellow garments, with red sashes tied in front. Most of the figures are repre-

sented in the act of bringing offerings to the gods: but on either side the door, the hero Ramases is holding by the hair a captive who is on one knee, and looks up,—in the one instance with a complete negro face; in the other, with a face certainly neither Egyptian nor negro, and whose chin ends in a peaked beard. Here we have the conquests of the hero in upper Africa, and probably in Asia. He holds up his falchion, as if about to strike; but the goddess behind him lifts her hand, as if in intercession, while Osiris, in front, holds forth the great knife, as if to command the slaughter. When Osiris carries, as here, the emblems of the crosier and the flagellum or whip, he is present in his function of Judge: and here, accordingly, we see him deciding the fate of the nations conquered by Ramases.

Within this outer hall is a transverse corridor, ending in two rude chambers, where I found nothing but bats. But beyond the corridor lies the sacred chamber, the shrine of the deity. There she is, in the form of the crowned head of a cow,—her emblematic disk being between the horns. In another part, she stands, as a cow, in a boat surrounded by water plants,—the king and queen bringing offerings to this “Lady of Aboshek, the foreign land.” We shall meet with Athor frequently as “Lady of the West;” and therefore as the morning star; as the welcomer of the Sun at the end of his course; and as the mild and transient Night which is quite a different personage from the stern and fixed Night of Chaos. As possessor or guardian of the West, Athor was patroness of the western part of Thebes,—“the Lybian suburb,” as it was called of old.* Plutarch

* Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians, IV. 387.

says that the death of Osiris was believed to have happened in her month;—the third Egyptian month: that her shrines were in that month carried about in procession; at the time when the Pleiades appear and the husbandmen began to sow their corn. The countenance of this goddess was everywhere in the temples so mild and tranquil as to accord well with the imagery of the Summer Night, the Morning Star, and the Seed-time, which are associated, in the Egyptian worship, with her name.—I found the figure in the adytum (Holiest Place) much mutilated: but the head and ears were still distinctly visible. Hieroglyphic legends on each side declare her name and titles. This temple extends, from the portal, about ninety feet into the rock. Little as I had yet learned how to look at temples, I found this full of interest.—In the course of the morning, we detected some of our own crew making a fire against the sculptures in the hall. Of course, we interfered, with grave faces: but there is no hope that Arabs will not make their fires in such convenient places, whenever they can. A cave at the top of the bank is irresistible to them, whether it be sculptured or not.

I was impatient to get to the Colossi of the large temple, which looked magnificent from our deck. So, after breakfast, I set forth alone, to see what height I could attain in the examination of the statues.

The southernmost is the only complete one. The next to it is terribly shattered: and the other two have lost the top of the helmet. They are much sanded up, though, thanks to Mr. Hay, much less than they were. The sand slopes up from the half-cleared entrance to

the chin of the northernmost colossus : and this slope of sand it was my purpose to climb. It was so steep, loose, and hot to the feet, that it was no easy matter to make my way up. The beetles, which tread lightly and seem to like having warm feet, got on very well ; and they covered the sand with a net work of tracks : but heavier climbers, shod in leather, are worsted in the race with them. But one cannot reach the chin of a colossus every day : and it was worth an effort. And when I had reached the chin, I made a little discovery about it which may be worth recording, and which surprised me a good deal at the time. I found that a part of the lower jaw, reaching half way up the lower lip, was composed of the mud and straw of which crude bricks are made. There had been evidently a fault in the stone, which was supplied by this material. It was most beautifully moulded. The beauty of the curves of these great faces is surprising in the stone ;—the fidelity of the rounding of the muscles, and the grace of the flowing lines of the cheek and jaw : but it was yet more wonderful in such a material as mud and straw. I cannot doubt that this chin and lip were moulded when the material was in a soft state :—a difficult task in the case of a statue seventy feet high, standing up against the face of a rock.—I called the gentlemen up, to bear witness to the fact : and it set us looking for more instances. Mr. E. soon found one. Part of the dress of the Second Osiride on the right hand, entering the temple, is composed of this same material, as smoothly curved and nicely wrought as the chin overhead. On examining closely, we found that this layer of mud and straw covered some chiselling

within. The artist had been carving the folds of the dress, when he came upon a fault in the stone which stopped his work till he supplied a surface of material which he could mould.

The small figures which stand beside the colossi and between their ankles, and which look like dolls, are not, as is sometimes said, of human size. The hat of a man of five feet ten inches does not reach their chins by two inches. These small figures are, to my eye, the one blemish of this temple. They do not make the great Ramases look greater, but only look dollish themselves.

On the legs of the shattered colossus are the Greek letters, scrawled as by a Greek clown, composing the inscription of the soldiers sent by Psammitichus in pursuit of the Egyptian deserters whom I mentioned as going up the country from Elephantine, when weary of the neglect in which they were left there. We are much obliged to "Damearchon, the son of Amæbichus, and Pelephus, the son of Udamus," for leaving, in any kind of scrawl, a record of an event so curious. One of the strangest sensations to the traveller in Egypt, is finding such traces as these of persons who were in their day modern travellers seeing the antiquities of the country, but who take their place now among the ancients, and have become subjects of Egyptian history. These rude soldiers, carving their names and errand on the legs of an ancient statue as they went by, passed the spot a century and a half before Cambyzes entered the country. One wonders what they thought of Thebes, which they had just seen in all its glory.

As nearly as we could judge by the eye, and by knowing pretty well the dimensions of the colossi, the

façade, from the base of the thrones to the top of the row of apes, is nearly or quite one hundred feet high. Above rises the untouched rock.

The faces of Ramases outside (precisely alike) are placid and cheerful,—full of moral grace: but the eight Osirides within (precisely alike too) are more. They are full of soul. It is a mistake to suppose that the expression of a face must be injured by its features being colossal. In Egypt it may be seen that a mouth three feet wide may be as delicate, and a nostril which spans a foot as sensitive in expression as any marble bust of our day. It is very wonderful, but quite true. Abdallatif has left us his testimony as follows,—in speaking of the Sphinx. “A little more than a bow-shot from these Pyramids, we see a colossal head and neck appearing above ground. . . . Its countenance is very charming, and its mouth gives an impression of sweetness and beauty. One would say that it smiles benignly.—An able man having asked me what I admired most of all that I had seen in Egypt, I told him that it was the truth of the proportions in the head of the Sphinx. . . . It is very astonishing that in a countenance so colossal, the sculptor should have preserved the precise proportions of all the parts, whilst Nature has presented no model of such a colossus, nor of any thing which could be compared to it.”* I was never tired of gazing at the Osirides, everywhere, and trying to imprint ineffaceably on my memory the characteristics of the old Egyptian face;—the handsome arched nose, with its delicate nostril; the well-opened, though long eye; the placid, innocent mouth, and the

* Relation de l' Egypte, l. I. ch. 4.

smooth-rounded, amiable chin. Innocence is the prevailing expression ; and sternness is absent. Thus the stiffest figures, and the most monotonous gesture, convey still only an impression of dispassionateness and benevolence. The dignity of the gods and goddesses is beyond all description, from this union of fixity and benevolence. The difficulty to us now is, not to account for their having been once worshipped, but to help worshipping them still. I cannot doubt their being the most abstract gods that men of old ever adored. Instead of their being engaged in wars or mutual rivalries, or favouritisms, or toils, or sufferings, here they sit, each complete and undisturbed in his function,—every one supreme,—free from all passion, but capable of all mild and serene affections. The Greek and Roman gods appear like wayward children beside them. Herodotus says that the Greek gods *were* children to these, in respect of age : * and truly they appear so in respect of wisdom and maturity. Their limitation of powers, and consequent struggles, rivalries and transgressions, their fondness and vindictiveness, their anger, fear and hope are all attributes of childhood, contrasting strikingly with the majestic passive possession of power, and the dispassionate and benignant frame of these ever-young old deities of Egypt. Vigilant, serene, benign, here they sit, teaching us to inquire reverentially into the early powers and condition of that Human Mind which was capable of such conceptions of abstract qualities as are represented in their forms. I can imagine no experience more suggestive to the thoughtful traveller,

* Herod. II. 4, 50, 58, 146.

anywhere from pole to pole, than that of looking with a clear eye and fresh mind on the ecclesiastical sculptures of Egypt, perceiving, as such an one must do, how abstract and how lofty were the first ideas of Deity known to exist in the world. That he should go with clear eyes and a fresh mind is needful: for if he carries a head full of notions about idolatry, obscenity, folly and ignorance, he can no more judge of what is before his eyes,—he can no more *see* what is before his face,—than a proud Mohammedan can apprehend Christianity in a catholic chapel at Venice, or an arrogant Jew can judge of Quakerism or Quietism.—If the traveller be blessed with the clear eye and fresh mind, and be also enriched by comprehensive knowledge of the workings of the human intellect in its various circumstances, he cannot but be impressed, and he may be startled, by the evidence before him of the elevation and beauty of the first conceptions formed by men of the Beings of the unseen world. And the more he traces downwards the history and philosophy of religious worship, the more astonished he will be to find to what an extent this early theology originated later systems of belief and adoration, and how long and how far it has transcended some of those which arose out of it. New suggestions will thence arise, that where in the midst of what is solemn and beautiful he meets with what appears to modern eyes puerile and grotesque, such an appearance may deceive, and there may be a meaning contained in it which is neither puerile nor grotesque. He will consider that Cambyzes might be more foolish in stabbing the bull Apis, to show

that it could bleed, which nobody denied, than the priests in conserving a sacred idea in the form of the bull. He will consider that the Sphinx might be to Egyptian eyes, not a hideous compound animal, as it is when carved by an English stone mason for a park gate, but a sacred symbol of the union of the strongest physical with the highest intellectual power on earth.

The seriousness I plead for comes of itself into the mind of any thoughtful and feeling traveller, at such a moment as that of entering the great temple of Aboo-Simbil. I entered it at an advantageous moment, when the morning sunshine was reflected from the sand outside so as to cast a twilight even into the adytum,—two hundred feet from the entrance. The four tall statues in the adytum, ranged behind the altar, were dimly visible: and I hastened to them, past the eight Osirides, through the next pillared hall, and across the corridor. And then I looked back, and saw beyond the dark halls and shadowy Osirides the golden sand-hill without, a corner of blue sky, and a gay group of the crew in the sunshine. It was like looking out upon life from the grave. When we left the temple, and the sun had shifted its place, we could no longer see the shrine. It is a great advantage to enter the temple first when the sun is rather low in the east.

The eight Osirides are perfectly alike,—all bearing the crozier and flagellum, and standing up against huge square pillars, the other sides of which are sculptured, as are the walls all round. The aisles behind the Osirides are so dark that we could not make out the devices without the help of torches:

and the celebrated medallion picture of the siege would have been missed by us entirely, if one of the crew had not hoisted another on his shoulders, to hold a light above the height of their united statures. There we saw the walled town, and the proceedings of the besieged and besiegers, as they might have happened in the middle ages. The north wall is largely occupied by a tablet, bearing the date of the first year of Ramases the Great: and on the other side of the temple, between two of the pillars, is another tablet, bearing the date of the thirty-fifth year of his reign. The battle scenes on the walls are all alive with strong warriors, flying foes, trampled victims, and whole companies of chariots. I observed that the chariot wheels were not mere disks, as we should have expected in so early an age, but had all six spokes. Every chariot wheel I saw in the country had six spokes, however early the date of the sculpture or painting. One figure on the south wall is admirable, —a warrior in red, who is spearing one foe, while he has his foot on the head of another.

There are two groups of chambers, of three each, opening out of this large hall: and two more separate side chambers. The six included in the two groups are very nearly (but not quite) covered with representations of offerings to the gods: very pretty, but with little variety. The offerings are of piles of cakes and fruit, lamps, vases of various and graceful shapes, and flasks. The lotus, in every stage of growth, is frequent. Sometimes it is painted yellow, veined with red.

The boat, that wonderful and favourite symbol which

we meet everywhere, is incessantly repeated here,—the seated figure in the convolution at bow and stern, the pavilion in the middle, and the paddle hanging over the side. One of these boats is carried by an admirable procession of priests, as a shrine, which is borne on poles of palm-trunks lashed together. Stone deewáns run round the walls of most of these little chambers. We could find no evidence of there being any means of ventilating these side-rooms; and how they could be used without, we cannot conceive,—enclosed as they are in the solid rock.

The second and smaller hall has four square pillars, sculptured, of course. Next comes the corridor, which has a bare unfinished little chamber at each end, now possessed by bats. The altar in the adytum is broken; and some barbarous wretches have cut their insignificant initials on it. Are there not rocks enough close by the entrance, on which they might carve their memorials of their precious selves, if carve they must? But this profaning of the altar is not the worst. One creature has cut his name on the tip of the nose of the northernmost colossus: others on the breast and limbs of the Osirides; and others over a large extent of the sculptured walls.

One of the four god figures in the adytum is Ra, who also occupies the niche in the façade over the entrance. Ra is the Sun. He is not Amun Ra, the Unutterable,*—the God of gods,—the only god: but a chief, as the term Ra seems to express. Phra, (Ra with the article,) by us miscalled Pharaoh, means a chief or king among men: and Ra is the chief of the visible creation: and

* Manetho says that Amun means "concealment."

here, in this temple, he is the principal deity, the others being Khem, or Egypt, Kneph, Osiris and Isis. As we go on, we shall perhaps be able to attain some notion of the relative offices and dignities of the gods. At the outset, it is necessary to bear in mind chiefly that the leading point of belief of the Egyptians, from the earliest times known to us, was that there was One Supreme,—or, as they said,—one only God, who was to be adored in silence, (as Jamblichus declares from the ancient Hermetic books,) and was not to be named; that most of the other gods were deifications of his attributes; while others again, as Egypt, the Nile, the Sun, the Moon, the West, &c., were deifications of the powers or forces on which the destiny of the Egyptian nation depended. We have also to remember that we must check our tendency to suppose Allegory in every part of the Egyptian system of theology. It is difficult to check this tendency to allegorise, bringing as we do the ideas of a long subsequent age to the interpretation of a theological system eminently symbolical to its priests, though not to the people at large: but we must try to conceive of these Egyptian gods as being, to the general Egyptian mind, actual personages, inseparably connected with the facts and appearances in which they were believed to exist. If we make the mistake of supposing them merely the names of such facts and appearances, and proceed to interpret them by the method of allegorical narrative, we shall soon find ourselves perplexed, and at a loss: for our view of the facts and appearances of Nature can never be like those of the Egyptians, whose science, though unquestionably great, lay in a different direction (for the most part) from

ours, and whose heavens and earth were hardly like the same that we see and inhabit.

For one instance,—in their theory of the formation of the world, they believed that when the formless void of eternal matter began to part off into realms, the igneous elements ascending and becoming a firmament of fiery bodies, and the heavier portions sinking and becoming compacted into earth and sea, the earth gave out animals,—beasts and reptiles; an idea evidently derived from their annual spectacle of the coming forth of myriads of living creatures from the soil of their valley, on the subsidence of the flood. When we remember that to them the Nile was the sea, and so called by them, and that they had before them the spectacle which is seen nowhere else, of the springing of the green herb after the separation of the waters from the land, we shall see how different their view of the creation must be from any which we could naturally form. In this particular case, we have adopted their traditions given to us through the mind of Moses; but where we have not the mind of Moses to interpret them to us, we must abstain from reading their meanings by any other light than that which they themselves afford us. As another instance, how should we allegorise for them about the West? What is the West to us? It is the place where the heavenly bodies disappear: and that is the only point we have in common with them. With them, the West was the unseen state. It was a dreary, unknown region beyond the dark river which the dead had to cross. The abodes of the dead were on its verge; and those solemn caves were the entrance of the Amenti, the region of judgment

and retribution. Nothing was heard thence but the bark of the wild dog at night; the vigilant guardian, as they believed, of the heavenly abode which the wicked were not to approach.* Nothing was seen there but the descent of the sun, faithful to the goddess who was awaiting him behind the hills;† and who, hanging above those hills as the brightest of the stars, showed herself the Protectress of the Western Shore. Such elements as these which they themselves give us, we may take and think over; but if we go on to mix up with them modern Greek additions about Apollo, and yet more modern metaphysical conceptions, in order to construct allegories as a key to old Egyptian theology, we cannot but diverge widely from old Egyptian ideas. And what is worse, we shall miss the perception of the indubitable earnestness of their faith. We have every possible evidence of their unsurpassed devoutness: but we shall lose the sense of it if we get into the habit of supposing them to have set up images of abstract qualities (as abstract qualities are to us) instead of dwelling in constant dependence on living divine personages. We may find symbols everywhere in the Egyptian theology; and analogies in abundance: but I do not know that any instances of complete or continuous allegory can be adduced. When we try to construct such, or think we have found them, we presently begin to complain of an intermixture of personages or of offices, such as should show us, not that the Egyptian worship was confused, but that we

* Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, V. 435.

† Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, IV. 388.

do not clearly understand the ideas of the worshippers, and must have mixed them with some of our own.

Kneph, known by his Ram's head, is, as I said, in the adytum with Ra; but, though a higher god than Ra, this temple is not dedicated to him, but to Ra, as is shown by the appearance of the latter on the façade. The deeds of the great Ramases, his adorer, are brought as an offering, and presented on the walls.—There appears at first something incongruous in the mingling, in these temples, of the benign serenity of the gods with the fury and cruelty of their warrior worshippers: but one soon remembers that it is an incongruity which remains to this day, and will doubtless remain till war is abolished. A custom so durable as that of consecrating warfare to God must have an idea at the bottom of it: and the idea is plain enough here. We find the same idea in the mind of this Ramases, and of Moses in his Song of deliverance, and of the Red Indian who shakes the scalps of his enemies at the end of his spear in his war-dance, and of the Crusaders in their thanksgivings for victory over the Saracens, and of our Cromwell in Ireland, and in the vindictive stanza of our National Anthem;—the idea that power to conquer is given from above, and that the results are therefore to the glory of him who gives the power. Such a method of observance, being natural in certain stages of the human mind, is right in its place;—in a temple of Ramases, for instance. The wonder is to find it in the jubilations of Christian armies, in the despatches of Cromwell,* and even in the Prayer-book of the English

* Cromwell to Vice-Admiral Goodson at Jamaica—"Make yourselves as strong as you can to beat the Spaniard, who will doubtless send a

Church, in direct connexion with an acknowledgment of the Prince of Peace, whose kingdom was not of this world.

One thing which struck me as strange in this hall of giants was a dwarfish statue, without a head. It measured two or three inches less in each limb than our middle-size, and was of course very insignificant among the Osirides. What it was, and how it came there, we could not learn.

When we looked abroad from the entrance, the view was calm and sweet. A large island is in the midst of the river, and shows a sandy beach and cultivated interior. The black, peaked hills of the opposite desert close in to the south, leaving only a narrow passage for the river.—It was nearly evening before we put off from the bank below the temple. It had been an animating and delightful day; and I found myself beginning to understand the pleasure of “temple-haunting;” a pleasure which so grew upon us, that we felt real grief when it came to an end. I, for one, had suspected beforehand that this work would soon become one of mere duty or routine: but we found, even before we left Nubia, that we were hardly satisfied to sit down to breakfast without having explored a temple.

good force into the Indies. I hope, by this time, the Lord may have blessed you to have light upon some of their vessels,—whether by burning them in their harbours or otherwise.”—*Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, vol. III. p. 156.

CHAPTER XI.

IBREEM.—DIRR.—SUBOOA.—DAKKEH.—GARF HOSEYN.

WHILE at breakfast the next morning (January 8th) we drew to shore under the great rock on which stands Ibreem, the station of Roman and Saracenic garrisons, in times when it was necessary to overawe Nubia, and protect the passage southwards. It was an important place during the wars of Queen Candace with the Roman occupants of Egypt and Nubia. It appears that the word Candace was probably a title, and not a proper name,—it being borne by a series of Ethiopian queens;—a curious circumstance by itself. Of the queen Candace who marched against Ibreem (Prémnis) we are told by Strabo that she was a woman of masculine courage, and had lost an eye.

We saw from our deck some grottoes in the rock, with paintings inside; and longed to get at them: but they were so difficult of access, (only by a rope) that Mr. E. went alone. They are of the time of the great Ramases and three earlier sovereigns of the same Period. The painting is still vivid; representing votive offerings. There are some very small statues in high relief at the upper end.

I could not be satisfied without mounting the cliff: and from its summit I obtained a view second only to

that above Asyoot. I could now understand something of the feeling which generates songs in praise of Nubia ; for many charming spots were visible from this height, — recesses of verdure, — small alluvions, where the cotton shrub was covered with its yellow blossoms, and crops of grain and pulse were springing vigorously. On the Arabian side, all looked dreary ; the sandy areas between its groups of black crags being sprinkled with Sheikhs' tombs, and scarcely any thing else ; and the only green being on a promontory here and there jutting into the river. The fertility was mainly on the Lybian shore ; and there it must once have been greater than now. Patches of coarse yellow grass within the verge of the Desert, and a shade of grey over the sand in places, seemed to tell of irrigation and drainage now disused. A solitary doum palm rose out of the sand, here and there ; and this was the only object in the vast yellow expanse, till the eye rested on the amethyst mountains which bounded all to the South and West. Some of these hills advanced, and some receded, so as to break the line : and their forms were as strange and capricious as their disposition. Some were like embankments : some like round tumuli : some like colossal tents. The river here was broad and sinuous ; and as far as I could see, on either hand, its course was marked by the richest verdure. The freshness, and vastness, and sublime tranquillity of this scene singularly impressed me.

The chief interest about the town or fortress was in the mixture of relics, — Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Saracenic and Turkish. The winged globe, Greek borders and columns, Roman walls, Mosques and Turkish

fortifications,—all these may be seen in half-an-hour's walk, heaped together or scattered about. The modern dwellings appear to be, for the most part, made of rough stones, instead of mud ;—the stones lying ready to the hand, I suppose, and the mud having to be brought up the rock. It is a truly desolate place now.

In the afternoon, we saw the capital :—Dirr, the capital of Nubia.—On the bank, we met the governor and his suite, with whom we exchanged salutations. We were walking so slowly, and were so ready to be spoken to, that the governor might have declared his wishes to us if he had not been shy. He preferred sending a message through our Rais, whom we met presently after ; and to whom he said that he was ashamed to ask us himself, but he should be much obliged to us to give him a bottle of wine. Such was the request of the Mohammedan governor of the capital of Nubia ! Our dragoman could not keep his countenance when he delivered the message. We did not see his Excellency again, and he never sent for the wine : so he did not sin against his Law by our means.

Dirr reminded me, more than any other place, of the African villages which Mungo Park used to set before us. It has two noble sycamores (so-called), one of which is the finest we saw in the country. It had a deewán round it, where the old people might sit and smoke, while the young sing and dance. The governor's house is partly of burnt brick,—quite a token of grandeur here. The other houses were of mud, as usual ;—clean and decent. The cemetery shows signs of care,—some low walls, ornamented at the coping, surrounding some of the graves, and pebbles being

neatly strewn over others. The roads were ankle-deep in dust. The palm-groves, with the evening light shining in among the stems, were a luxury to the eye. The people looked clean and open-faced. Some of them were very light; and these were probably descended from Sultan Selim's Bosnians, like many of the fair-complexioned people in the neighbourhood of the Sultan's garrisons.—Many articles were offered for sale,—the people hastening to spread their mats in the dusty road, and the women holding out their necklaces and bracelets. One woman asked five piastres for her necklace; and she would have had them: but seeing this, she suddenly raised her demand to twenty. She is probably wearing that necklace at this moment. The gentlemen bought mats for our tents here, giving nine piastres (1s. 8½d.) apiece for them.

The temple of Dirr interested us much from the novelty of its area and portico being in the open air, when the rest of the temple is in the rock. I may observe too that this was the only temple we saw in Nubia which stood on the eastern bank.—The area once had eight pillars, the bases only of which remain: and of its war pictures nothing is visible but faint traces. I made out only a chariot wheel, and a few struggling combatants. We have here the same subjects, and the same deity, as at Abou-Simbil. Ramases the Great consecrates his victories to the god Ra, whom he calls his patron, and after whom he is named Ra-mses.—The corridor or portico is faced with four Osiride pillars. Through it, we enter the rock part of the temple, and find ourselves in a hall supported by six square pillars. The walls are sculptured over in "intaglio

relevato," as it has been called ;—that is, the outlines are cut in a groove, more or less deep, and the relief of the interior rises from the depth of the groove. The walls are now stained and blackened; and they have a mouldering appearance which portends speedy defacement. But the king and his captives, and his lion and his enemies, and his gods and his children, are still traceable. Over the lion, which seems a valuable auxiliary in the battles of Ramases, and which is here seizing a captive, is written an inscription which says, according to Champollion, "the lion, servant of his majesty, tearing his enemies to pieces."—Champollion found here a valuable list of the names of the children of Ramases, placed according to their age and rank. In the small temple at Aboo-Simbil, the king has his son at his feet, and his wife has her daughters, with their names and titles inscribed. At this temple of Dirr, the list is apparently made complete, there being here seven sons and eight daughters, with declarations of their names and titles.

The adytum is small. The four figures which it once contained are gone: but their seat remains, and their marks against the wall. Two dark chambers, containing some imperfect sculptures, are on either hand; and this is all. This temple is twenty feet deeper in the whole than the small one at Aboo-Simbil, but it is inferior in workmanship.

On our return to the dahabieh, we saw a sight very rare to us now;—a cloudy sky. The sky looked angry, with its crimson flushes, and low hanging fiery clouds. We found the people angry too,—upon a subject which makes people elsewhere strangely passionate,—a

currency question. The inhabitants of Dirr have only recently learned what money is, having traded by barter till within a very short time. They had this evening some notion in their heads which our dragoman and Rais thought absurd, about a change in the value of money in the next trading village ; and they came down to the bank clamouring for more money for their mats and necklaces. When all explanation and remonstrance failed to quiet them, Alee snatched up a tub, and threw water over them : and then arose a din of screams and curses. We asked Alee what the curses were : they were merely the rational and safe hope that we might all die.

The crimson flushes faded away from the sky, and the angry clouds melted : but we had now no moon except before breakfast, when we were glad to see her waste daily.

There was another temple in waiting for us the next morning (January 9th)—another temple of the Great Ramases;—that of Subooa. The novelty here was a very interesting one ; the Dromos (Course or avenue) and its sphinxes.

The temple is about five hundred yards from the shore ; and a few dwellings lie between. The sand was deep and soft, but, for once, delightfully cool to the feet, at this early morning hour. This sand has been so blown up against the sphinxes as to leave but little of them visible. There are four on each hand, as you go up to the propyla : but one is wholly covered ; and five others are more or less hidden. Two are unburied ; but their features are nearly gone. The head of another is almost complete, and very striking in its

wise tranquillity of countenance. Two rude statues stand beside the sphinxes at the entrance of the dromos; and two colossi lie overthrown and shattered beside their pedestals at the inner end of the dromos, and before the propyla. The cement seems to have fallen out between the stones of the propyla: but over their mouldering surface are war-sculptures dimly traceable:—the conquests of Ramases again. Within the gateway is the hall where ten Osirides are ranged, five on each hand, dividing the hall into three aisles. Here I saw, for the first time, how these massive temples were roofed. The ten Osirides supported the heavy architrave, whose blocks joined, of course, over the heads of the colossi. From this architrave to the outer walls were laid massive blocks of stone, which formed the roof. We shall see hereafter that when it was desired to light the interior, the roof over the middle aisle was raised above that of the side aisles; and the space left open, except for the necessary supporting blocks, or (as at El-Karnak) a range of stone gratings.

The Osirides here are very rude; composed of stones of various shapes and sizes, cemented together. I suppose they were once covered with cement; but now they look, at the first glance, like mere fragments of pillars. A second look however detects the crossed arms, and the crosier and flagellum.—Of the adytum at the extremity nothing was visible but the globe and asps over its door; and the sand was so drifted into the hall that we could see over the wall at the upper end.—It will be perceived that this is a rude and ruined temple, with no interest belonging to it but its antiquity and its array of sphinxes.

That evening, we had the promise of another temple for the next morning's work. We reached Dakkeh, the Pselchê of Strabo, at 10 P.M.: but we could not moor under the western bank, from the strength of the wind, and were obliged to stand across to the other shore.

The morning of the 10th was bright and cool, and we were early ashore, where we saw a good deal besides the temple. A village, small, but not so minute as usual, stands near the bank; and its inhabitants are good-looking and apparently prosperous. I saw from the top of the propylon, a large patch of fertile land lying back on the edge of the Desert, or in it. A canal or ditch carried water from the river to this land, where there were two or more sakias to lift it. At least, I saw a belt of flourishing castor-oil plants and other shrubs extending from the river to where they met the sakias. Further in the Desert I observed more of those grey expanses which tell of cultivable soil beneath, and of former irrigation. This must have been a flourishing district once; and it is not a distressed one now.

The women were much adorned with beads,—blue, black and white. Some would permit us to examine them: others fled and hid themselves behind huts or walls, on our merely looking in their faces: and of these none was so swift as the best dressed woman of them all. She had looped back, with her blue necklace, the mantle she wore on her head, to leave her hands and eyes free for making her bread. Of all the scamperers she was the swiftest when our party began to look about them. A mother and daughter sat on the ground within a small enclosure, grinding millet

with the antique quhern: a pretty sight, and a dexterously-managed, though slow process. Several of the women had brass nose-rings, which to my eyes look about as barbarous and ugly as ear-rings; and no more. When we come to the piercing flesh to insert ornaments, I do not see that it matters much whether the ear or nose is pierced. The insertion is surely the barbarism.

While I was on the top of the propylon of Dakkeh, I saw far off to the north-west, a wide stretch of blue waters, with the reflection of shores and trees. Rather wondering how such a lake or reach of the river could be there, while the Nile seemed to be flowing north-east, and observing that these waters were bluer than those of the river, I asked myself whether this could possibly be the Mirage, by which I had promised myself never to be deceived. My first thought was of mirage: but a little further study nearly convinced me that it was real water,—either a lake left by the inundation, or a reach of the river brought there by a sudden bend. I was still sufficiently uncertain to wish my friends to come up and see; though the reflection of the groves and clumps on the banks was as perfect as possible in every line. Just as I was going down to call my party, I saw a man's head and shoulders come up out of the midst of the lake:—a very large head and shoulders,—such as a man might have who was near at hand. The sensation was strange, and not very agreeable. The distant blue lake took itself off in flakes. The head and shoulders belonged to a man walking across the sand below: and the groves and clumps and well-cut banks resolved themselves into

scrubby bushes, patches of coarse grass, and simple stones. This was the best mirage I have ever seen, for its beauty and the completeness of the deception. I saw many afterwards in the Desert; and a very fine one in the plain of Damascus: but my heart never beat again as it did on the top of the Dakkeh propylon.—I had a noble view of the Desert and the Nile from that height: and it was only sixty-nine steps of winding stair that I had to ascend. These propyla were the watch-towers and bulwarks of the temples in the old days when the temples of the Deities were the fortifications of the country. If the inhabitants had known early enough the advantage of citadels and garrisons, perhaps the Shepherd Race might never have possessed the country; or would at least have found their conquest of it more difficult than, according to Manetho, they did. “It came to pass,” says Manetho (as Josephus cites him), “I know not how, that God was displeased with us: and there came up from the East, in a strange manner, men of an ignoble race, who had the confidence to invade our country, and easily subdued it by their power, without a battle. And when they had our rulers in their hands, they burnt our cities, and demolished the temples of the gods, and inflicted every kind of barbarity upon the inhabitants, slaying some, and reducing the wives and children of others to slavery.” It could scarcely have happened that these Shepherds, “of an ignoble race,” would have captured the country “without a battle,” and laid hands on the rulers, if there had been such citadels as the later built temples, and such watch-towers and bulwarks as these massive propyla. When-

ever I went up one of them, and looked out through the loop-holes in the thick walls, I felt that these erections were for military, full as much as religious purposes. Indeed, it is clear that the ideas were scarcely separable, after war had once made havoc in the valley of the Nile. As for the non-military purposes of these propyla;—they gave admission through the portal in the centre to the visitors to the temple, whether they came in the ordinary way, or in the processions which were so imposing in the olden times. It must have been a fine sight, from the loop-holes or parapets of these great flanking towers,—the approach or departure of the procession of the day,—the banners bearing the symbol of god or hero; the boat-shrine, borne by the shaven and white-robed priests, in whose hands lay most of the power, and in whose heads all the learning, of their age. To see them marching in between the sphinxes of the avenue, followed by the crowd bearing offerings;—the men with oxen, cakes and fruits, and the women with turtle doves and incense,—all this must have been a treat to many a sacerdotal watchman at this height.—Such an one had probably charge of the flags which were hoisted on these occasions on the propyla. There are on many of these towers, wide perpendicular grooves, occupied by what look like ladders of hieroglyphic figures. These grooves held the flag-staves on festival days, when the banners, covered with symbols, were set floating in the air.—These propyla were good stations from which to give out news of the rising or sinking of the Nile: and they were probably also used for observatories. They were a great acquisition to the country when intro-

duced or invented; and their introduction earlier might, perhaps, as I have said, have materially changed the destinies of the nation. The instances are not few in which these flanking towers have been added to a pylon of a much earlier date.

The interest of this temple is not in its antiquity. It is of various dates; and none of them older than the times of the Ptolemies. The interest lies in the traces of the different builders and occupants of this temple, and in the history (according to Diodorus) of the Ethiopian king who built the adytum,—the most sacred part of it. This king Ergamun, who lived within half a century before our era, had his doubts about the rectitude and reasonableness of the method by which the length of kings' reigns was settled in Ethiopia. Hitherto, the custom had been for the priests to send word to their brother, the king, when the gods wished him to enter their presence: and every king, thus far, had quietly destroyed himself, on receiving the intimation. Ergamun abolished the custom,—not waiting, as far as appears, for his summons, but going up to "a high place" with his troops, when he slew the priests in their temple, and reformed some of the institutions which no one had hitherto dared to touch. Sir G. Wilkinson points out the fact* that a somewhat resembling custom still remains in a higher region of Ethiopia, where it is thought shocking that a king should die a natural death; that is, like other people. The kings of this tribe, when they believe themselves about to die, send word to their ministers, who immediately cause them to be strangled. This is reported

* Wilkinson's *Modern Egypt and Thebes*, II. 319.

by the expedition sent by the present ruler of Egypt to explore the sources of the White Nile.

Though Ergamun was not willing to take the word of the priests for the will of the gods, he appears to have been forward in the service of his deities, to whom he is seen presenting offerings, and whom he proudly acknowledges as his patrons, guardians, and nourishers. The old adytum, built by him, looks hoary and crumbling; more so than the more ancient temples we have seen: but the sculptures are plainly distinguishable. It is much blackened by fires; but in one corner, where the sculptures are protected by a block of stone which has fallen across, I found a very clear group,—of the king standing between Ra and Thoth, the god of intellect and the arts, concerning whom Socrates relates a curious anecdote in the *Phædrus** of Plato. The two gods are holding vases aloft, from which they pour each a stream of the emblem of Life;—immortalising “the ever-living Ergamun,” as his cartouche calls him. Under the cornice are four decorative borders, on the four sides of the chamber. One gives the emblems of Ra and Thoth,—the hawk and ibis,—squatted face to face in successive pairs: another, the royal cartouches, guarded by hawks with expanded wings: a third the emblem of duration or permanency: while on the one over the door are strips of hieroglyphics. The thrones of gods and kings have a compartment left in the lower corner of the massive seat, to be filled up with devices. Sometimes this is done: sometimes not. In this adytum the compartment is occupied by the device taken from much older monuments, and seen now on the pedestals

* *Phædr.* Tayl. Trans. p. 364.

of the Pair at Thebes,—the water plants of the god Nilus which are bound up to support the royal throne.

There was enough of colour left here to show us how materially the effect of the sculpture was made to depend upon it. The difference in the clearness of the devices is wonderful when they are seen in a mass, and when each compartment or side of a chamber is marked off by broad bands of deep colour. The supplying of details, and yet more of perspective, by painting gives a totally different character to the sculptures; which difference ought to be allowed for where the colours have disappeared. I am not speaking here of the goodness or badness of the taste which united painting and sculpture in the old Egyptian monuments. I am only pointing out that it *was* the Egyptian method of representation; and that their works cannot therefore be judged of by the mere outlines. The colours remaining in this chamber are a brilliant blue, a pale clear green (which survives everywhere and is beautiful), and a dull red,—deeper for the garments, lighter for the skins.

This chamber is completely cased, except the entrance, with more modern building. It is shut in, roof and all, as if it had been pushed into a box. The old doorway, also the work of Ergamun, is built round by a later devotee. The chambers erected by the Ptolemies have some modern decorations mixed in with the ancient symbols,—such as the olivewreath, a harp of a different make from the old Egyptian, and the Greek caduceus, instead of the native one.

Some yet more modern occupants have sadly spoiled this temple. The Christians might very naturally feel that they could not go to worship till they had shut

out from their eyesight the symbols of the old faith: and we therefore should not be hard upon them for plastering over the walls. We should forgive them all the more readily because such plastering is an admirable method of preserving the old sculptures. But the Christians must have their saints all about them: and there they are, dim, but obvious enough,—with huge wry faces, and flaring glories over their heads. Some of the sculptures which have been restored, and some which appear never to have been plastered, look beautiful beside these daubs.

In the portico of this temple we first saw an instance of the more modern, the Greek, way of at once inclosing and lighting the entrance to a temple,—by inter-columnar screens and doorway; called now a portico *in antis*. I do not remember seeing this in any of the ancient buildings; while it is found at Philœ, Dendara, Isna, and other Ptolemaic erections. It has its beauty and convenience: but it does not seem to suit the primitive Egyptian style, where the walls were relieved of their deadness by sculpture, but, I think, never by breaks.

There are some Greek inscriptions on different parts of this temple; and two certainly which are not Greek. Whether they are Coptic, or the more ancient Egyptian Enchorial writing, it is not for me to say.—The outside of the temple is unfinished: and fragments of substantial stone wall about it appear like work left, rather than demolished. Within one of these walls, I found a passage; a not uncommon discovery among the massive buildings which might thus conveniently communicate by a safe and concealed method.

This was our work before breakfast.—Another temple was ready for us after dinner;—that of the ancient Tutzis, now Garf Hoseyn.

I walked on shore for a few minutes, while dinner was hastened; and saw some agricultural proceedings which were amusing to a stranger. Two or three donkeys were bringing down dust and sand from the Desert, across a pretty wide tract of cultivated land, to qualify the richness of the Nile mud. Their panniers were mere frail-baskets; and when they were emptied, the wind (which was strong) carried away a good proportion of the contents; and the rest looked such a mere sprinkling that I admired the patience which could procure enough for a whole field. But carts are not known so high up the Nile, nor panniers worthy of the name. We had moored just under a sakia, whose creak was most melancholy. This creak is the sweetest and most heart-stirring music in the world to the Nile peasant; just as the Alp-horn is to the Swiss. It tells of provision, property, wonted occupation, home, the beautiful Nile, and beloved oxen. Any song would be charming with such a burden. But to us it was a mere dismal creak; and when it goes on in the night, as happens under a thrifty proprietor, I am told it is like a human wail, or the cry of a tortured animal. So much for the operation of the same sound through different ideas! The shed of this sakia was really pretty:—inhabited by a sleek ox, and a sprightly boy-driver; shaded by a roof of millet-stalks, and hung over with white convolvulus and the purple bean of this region. Our Dongola sailor caught up a little romping boy from among his companions, and brought

him on board by force. The terror of the child was as great as if we had been ogres. I could not have conceived anything like it, and should be glad to know what it was that he feared. His worst moment of panic seemed to be when we offered him good things to eat; though his companions on shore were by that time calling out to him to take what we offered. His captor forced some raisins into his mouth; and his change from terror to doubt, and from doubt to relish when he began to taste his dose, was amusing to see. Raisins were not a bribe to detain him, however; he was off like a shot, the moment he was released. I suppose his adventure will be a family anecdote, for many generations to come.

The first view of the temple from a distance is very striking,—its area pillars standing forth from the rock, like the outworks of the entrance gate of a mountain. This temple is of the time of the great Ramases, and is dedicated to Phthah,—the god of Artisan Intellect and Lord of Truth:—not the god of Truth, which had its own representative deity; but the possessor of truth, by which he did his creative works. He is the efficient creator, working in reality and by fundamental principles, and not by accommodation or artifice. The scarabæus was sacred to him (though not exclusively) and the frog: the latter as signifying the embryo of the human species; the former, as some say, because the beetle prepares a ball of earth, and there deposits its eggs, and thus presents an image of the globe and its preparation for inhabitancy. However this may be, here we have the creative god, the son of Kneph, the ordaining

* Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians, IV. 250.

deity, at whose command he framed the universe. It may be remembered that this was the deity to whom, according to tradition, the first temple was raised in Egypt;—when Menes, having redeemed the site of Memphis from the waters, began the city there, and built the great temple of Phthah, renowned for so many ages afterwards.—Memphis and this Garf Hoseyn formerly bore the same name, derived from their deity:—viz., Phthahei or Thyphthah. His temple has been found by some travellers as imposing as any on the Nile. It has been compared even with Aboo-Simbil. This must be owing, I think, to the singular crowding of the colossi within a narrow space; and perhaps also to the hoary, blackened aspect of this antique speos. The impression cannot possibly arise from any beauty or true grandeur in the work,—to which the inspiration of the god seems to have been sadly wanting. We saw nothing ruder than this temple; which yet is grand in its way.

The whole of it is within the rock except the area. The area has four columns in front, and four Osirides. These colossi are round-faced and ugly, and have lost their helmets, and some their heads. One head lies topsy-turvy, the placid expression of the face contrasting strangely with the agony of its position. The colossi do not hold the crosier and flagellum in their crossed hands, as usual; but both in the right hand, while the left arm hangs by the side. On the remnant of the wall of the area are some faint traces of sculpture, and two niches, containing three figures each.—The striking moment to the visitor is that of entering the rock. He finds himself among six Osirides which look enormous

from standing very near each other ;—themselves and the square pillars behind them seeming to fill up half the hall. These figures are, after all, only eighteen feet high : and of most clumsy workmanship ;—with short thick legs, short ill-shaped feet, and more bulk than grandeur throughout. I observed here, as at Abou-Simbel, that the wide separation between the great toe and the next seems to tell of the habitual use of sandals.

In the walls of the aisles behind the Osirides, are eight niches, each containing three figures in high relief. In every niche, the figures are represented, I think, in the same attitude,—with their arms round one another's necks ; but they bear different symbols. The middle figure of every group is Ra, as patron of Ramases ; and he is invoked as dwelling at Subboa and Dirr, as well as here ; the three temples being, as we have seen, of one group or family. Ra is here called the son of Phthah and Athor. The sculptures on the wall are now much blackened by the torches of visitors, and perhaps by Arab fires. But the bright colours, of which traces yet remain, may have much ameliorated the work in its own day. Across the usual corridor, with its usual pair of chambers inhabited by bats, lies the Holy Place. It has an altar in the middle, and a recess with four figures. The goddess Anouké, crowned with her circlet of feathers, and Athor are here.

This temple extends only one hundred and thirty feet into the rock.—Its position and external portico are its most striking features.

We returned by the village, and certainly should not have found out for ourselves that the people are the

savages they are reputed to be. They appeared friendly, cheerful, and well-fed. We looked into some houses, and found the interiors very clean. Many of the graves of their cemetery have jars at the head, which are duly filled with water every Friday,—the Mohammedan Sabbath. The door of a yard which we passed in the village had an iron knocker, of a thoroughly modern appearance. I wonder how it came there.

There was a strong wind this evening; and the boat rolled so much as to allow of neither writing nor reading in comfort. We were not sorry therefore to moor below Dendoor at 10 P.M., and enjoy the prospect of a quiet night, and another temple before breakfast.

CHAPTER XII.

DENDOOR.—KALÁB'-SHEH.—BIGGEH.—PHILÆ.—LEAVING
NUBIA.

OF the temple of Dendoor there is little to say, as it is of Roman time, and therefore only imitative Egyptian. It has a grotto behind, in the rock : and this grotto contains a pit : so I suppose it is a place of burial. The temple is sacred to the great holy family of Egypt, Osiris, Isis and Horus ; and the sacred chamber contains only a tablet, with a sculpture of Isis upon it, and a few hieroglyphic signs. The quantity of stones heaped in and about this little temple is remarkable.

I took a walk over the rising grounds behind till I lost sight of the temple and our boat and people : and never did I see anything wilder than the whole range of the landscape. There was a black craggy ravine on either hand, which must occasionally, I should think, be the passage of torrents. There are rains now and then, however rarely, in this country ; and when they do come they are violent. Some of the tombs at Thebes bear mournful witness of the force with which torrents rush through any channels of the rocks that they can find. Not only were these ravines black, but the whole wide landscape except a little peep of the Nile, and a bit of purple distance to the north, and two

lilac summits to the south, peeping over the dark ridge. Nothing more dreary could well be conceived, unless it be an expanse of polar snow: yet it was exquisitely beautiful in point of colour:—the shining black of the whole surface, except where the shadows were jet, the bright green margin of the inch of river: the white sheikh's tomb behind the palms on that tiny spot: and the glowing amethyst of the two southern summits,—these in combination were soft and brilliant to a degree inconceivable to those who have not been within the tropics. There was a bracing mild wind on this ridge which, by reviving the bodily sense, seemed to freshen the outward world: and truly sorry I was to return. This was my last gaze upon tropical scenery too. We were to leave the tropic this afternoon, at Kaláb'-sheh.

I suppose even such an out-of-the-way region as this may be enlightened now and then as to foreign customs by the return of wandering traders or voyagers. I saw to-day on the eastern shore a house which might have been built by an European; its front neatly painted red and white; its doors yellow; and its windows of glass. It was placed with its back to the prevailing north wind; and it had a regular approach between buttresses. Two houses near had glass windows also. Some adventurous Nubian has come home a great man, probably, and is astonishing the natives with his outlandish ways.

While we were at dinner off Kaláb'-sheh, the people came down to the shore, and made a market. When their wares were ranged, they were a pretty sight;—the baskets of henneh, the spears and daggers, and the curiosities dug out from the temples.

Having happily some idea what to look for here, we hastened to the small speos of Beyt-el-Wellee, a quarter of a mile from the large temple, while we yet had full daylight.—The view from the entrance is beautiful, commanding the recess of fertile ground which seems to flow in from the river, and fill the angle between the hills. This recess was clustered with palms which were softly swaying their shadowy heads below us. The opposite shore was of the bright yellow of evening; and to the right, below us, stood the massive temple of Kaláb' sheh, with its outworks of heaped stones, and its traces of terraces, flights of steps, and quays, all the way down to the river. This little rock-temple of Beyt-el-Wellee is as interesting as any thing in Egypt, except the remains of the First Period. It is full of the glory of the great Ramases again. But it is not dedicated to Ra, but to Amunra;—not to the Sun of the Universe, but to the Spiritual Sun,—the universal centre of Being,—the Unknown and Unutterable,—the God of Gods. With him is joined Kneph, the ram-headed god, the animating Spirit of the creation, which gives Life to its organised beings,—thus working together with Phthah, the creator, or Artisan-Intellect. The third deity of this little temple is the virgin goddess Anouké, the goddess of Purity and Household ties. She appears very frequently in the more ancient temples, and was especially honoured in this southern region, where she becomes quite familiar, with her feather crown, her sceptre of lotus in one hand, and the symbol of Life in the other.

The approach to the cave entrance is between quarried rocks covered with sculptures of extraordinary merit ;

of which I shall have to speak presently. The temple itself consists of only two chambers;—the outer hall and the Holy Place. At first, one's impression is that one can see nothing, except the two elegant polygonal pillars which were supporting this roof ages before they gave the hint of the early Doric. A few hieroglyphic signs on the faces of these pillars engage the eye; which is then led on to distinguish bands of colour; and presently to perceive that the walls have been divided into compartments by margins of colour, and rows of hieroglyphic signs. Some dim appearance of large figures, under the films of dust and mould, is next perceived; and in the inner chamber, it was plain, as Mr. E. pointed out to me, that one figure had been washed. There were the tricklings of the water, from the feet to the ground; and the figure was, though dim, so much brighter than every thing else, that I felt irresistibly tempted to try to cleanse a bit of the wall, and restore to sight some of its ancient paintings.—We sent down to the boat,—about half a mile,—for water, tow, soap, and one or two of the crew; and while the rest of my party went to explore the great modern temple, I tucked up my sleeves, mounted on a stone, and began to scrub the walls, to show the boy Hasan what I wanted him to do. I would let no one touch the wall, however, till I had convinced myself that no colour would come off. The colours were quite fast. We might rub with all our strength without injuring them in the least. It was singularly pleasant work, bringing forth to view these elaborate old paintings. The colours came out bright and deep as on the day they were laid on,—so many thousand years ago! Every moment, the details

of the costume and features showed themselves on the kingly figure I was unveiling; the red and yellow pattern on the crown, and the flagellum: the armlets, bracelets, belts and straps; the ends of the sash; the folds of the garment, and its wrapping over above the knee: the short mantle, the vest, the tippet or necklaces, and the devices of the throne. It began to grow dusk before we had finished two figures: and indeed I cannot say that we completely finished any; for a slight filminess spread over the paintings as they dried, which showed that another rubbing was necessary. I did long to stay a whole day, to clean the entire temple: but this could not be done. I was careful to give a dry-rubbing to our work before we left it, that no injury might afterwards arise from damp: and I trust our attempt may yet be so visibly recorded on the walls as to induce some careful traveller to follow our example, and restore more of these ancient paintings.

The sculptures on the outside, on either hand of the approach, are now quite destitute of colour; and it does not seem to be wanted here, so finished are the details.—On one side we see Ramases on his throne, receiving a world of wealth in the shape of tribute from the conquered Ethiopians. The Prince of Cush and his two children, all captives, are brought up by the eldest son of the conqueror; the names of all the parties being affixed in hieroglyphic characters. We see piles of ostrich's eggs, bags of gold, and ornaments; an array of fans, elephants' teeth, leopard skins, and other southern wealth; a troop of Ethiopians bringing an Oryx (antelope), a lion, oxen and gazelles: and in the lower line of tribute-bearers, we see apes and a

camelopard. These articles are admirable likenesses; and the whole procession is a most lively spectacle. But the battle-scene at the outer end is remarkably interesting, from the representation given of the wildness of the enemy's country. The foe are flying into the woods; and a woman cooking under a tree is warned by her little son that the conqueror is coming. A wounded chief, (of whom she may be the wife) is carried by his soldiers; and a boy is throwing dust on his head, in token of despair. The king and his two sons are in separate chariots, each with his charioteer: and the king is discharging his arrows as he goes.— Elsewhere on these walls, the king is his own charioteer, having the reins fastened round his waist, that his arms may be left free. The animals are, as usual in these old sculptures, admirably done; the heads of the oxen appearing to my eye as good in their quiet way as the bull of Paul Potter, in his more vehement mood.

The foe on the opposite wall is supposed to be some people in Arabia Petræa;—Eastern at all events. We have the conqueror again, on his throne, with his lion reposing at its base; in his car; in single combat, and in the act of slaying his foes. We have a walled city; and the other accompaniments of these war-pictures: but the Ethiopian tribute, and the woman cooking at her fire in the wood are more interesting to the observer of this day.

I was struck by the extraordinary grace of some of the objects about this temple. The lamp used in the offerings to the deities is beautiful;—a delicate hand holding a cup from which the flame issues; while an orifice at the elbow-end of the lamp is receiving the

oil.—In one of the groups in the adytum, I saw the first instance I had met with (except in the rude sculptures of Garf Hoseyn) of a departure from the severity of attitude usually observed. The union of the deities in the reception of homage is marked by the arm of the one hanging over the shoulder of the other.

We are told by Sir G. Wilkinson that this temple has been the abode, at some time, of a Mohammedan hermit.* Some have supposed that the Christians have been here, obliterating the sculptures. I saw no traces of them ; and I think the clouding-over of the paintings is no more than may be accounted for by lapse of years, and, possibly, a less dry situation than that of many of the old monuments. We must remember that this temple is more than three thousand years old.

On leaving the shadowy speos, I found there was still daylight enough for a survey of the renowned great temple of Kaláb'-sheh. I was glad to go over it, and admire its magnificence, and the elegance of many parts ; and be amazed at its vastness : but it is too modern to interest us much here. It was founded and carried on,—(not quite to completion)—by one after another of the Cæsars : and it is therefore not truly Egyptian. The most interesting circumstance to me was that here we could form some judgment of the effect of the Egyptian colour-decoration : for here there were two chambers in fine preservation, except where water had poured down from the massive lion-head spouts (Roman) and had washed away the colours. The relief to the eye of these strips of pure sculpture

*. Wilkinson's *Modern Egypt and Thebes*, II. p. 313, (note.)

was very striking. My conclusion certainly was, from the impression given by these two chambers, that, however valuable colour may be for bringing out the details, and even the perspective, of sculptured designs, any large aggregate of it has a very barbaric appearance.—Still, we must not judge of the old Egyptian painting by this Roman specimen. The disk of Isis is here painted deep red,—the colour of the ordinary complexion. The pale green and brilliant blue of the ancient times are present; and I saw here, and here only, a violet or plum-colour.

As for the rest, this temple is a heap of magnificent ruin; magnificent for vastness and richness; but not for taste. One pillar standing among many overthrown,—rich capitals toppled down among rough stones; and such mounds of fragments as make us wonder what force could have been used to cause such destruction,—these are the interest of this temple. It may be observed too, that the adytum has no figure at the end, and that it appears never to have been finished. It is a singular spectacle,—the most sacred part unfinished, while the capitals of the outer columns, with their delicate carvings of vine-leaves and tendrils twining among the leaves of the doum palm, are overthrown and broken!

This temple is believed to have stood on the site of an older one, from some ancient memorials being found on a few of the stones employed: but the existing building was begun in the reign of Augustus, carried on by some of his successors, and never finished.—As it was the largest temple in Nubia, the Christians naturally laid hands on it; and a saint, and several

halos look out very strangely from among the less barbarous heathen pictures on the walls of the room within the outer hall.

This evening we descended the rapids of Kaláb'-sheh, and had left the tropic: and a cold, blowing evening it was.—Early next morning, the three pylons of the Dabód temple—its distinguishing feature,—stood out clear on their sandy platform. These pylons are almost the only interesting thing about this temple, which is of the time of the early Ptolemies, and carried on by Augustus and Tiberius. It never was finished; and now its massive walls are cracked and bending in all directions. The soil below seems washed or actually grubbed out, so as to endanger the mass above.

There is a mummy-pit in the brow of the hill, a quarter of a mile behind. I went to see what the little clouds of dust meant, and found some men and boys pulling out human legs and arms for our gratification. I was much better pleased with the view I obtained from the next ridge, whence I saw to the south-west the sandstone quarries which furnished the material for the temple. The recesses and projections of the stone looked as sharp cut as ever.

We were now only six miles from Philæ, where we were to remain twenty-four hours. After posting up our journals, we had enough to do in admiring the beauty of the scenery, which we had seen before only in the vagueness of moonlight. I think the five miles above Philæ the most beautiful on the Nile, and certainly the most varied,—with the gorges among the rocks, the black basalt contrasting with the springing wheat and the yellow sands, and the dark green palms;

—and soon, Philæ opening on the sight, and its hypæthral temple, (built to look beautiful from hence) setting up its columns against the sky: and all this so shut in by coves and promontories, and the water rendered so smooth by its approach to the dam of the islands, as to make of the whole an unique piece of lake scenery. Two mosques, a convent, and a sheikh's tomb on a pinnacle of the rock, gave character to the scene: and so did a woman on the shore, with her veiled face and water-jar, reminding us that we were re-entering Egypt Proper. I could not bear to miss any part of this approach to Philæ; and I therefore carried my dinner up to the deck, and received all that singular imagery, never to lose it again while I live.

At four o'clock we were close upon Philæ: but the island of Biggeh, also sacred, looked tempting, and we turned towards it, to explore its remains before sunset. The black rocks round show inscriptions in great numbers: and these are full of light and interest. Some are of the Pharaohs of a very early time; actually inscribed by the tributary kings who reigned at Thebes during the dominion of the Shepherds; and others of the great monarchs who drove out the Shepherds, and raised the glory of Egypt to its highest point. Some inscribe merely their names,—their cartouches, which catch the eye on every hand. Some append to these the declaration that they came in pilgrimage to the gods of these holy places. Some carve a record of the granite blocks they have taken for their public works; and others leave a declaration of their victories over the Ethiopians. What an inestimable country this is, where the very rocks by the

wayside offer indisputable materials of history to you as you pass by !

The other remains on Biggeh are forlorn enough. Two columns exist of a temple of the Ptolemies re-built upon a very old Pharaonic foundation. Fragments of sculpture lie about : and one pictured wall forms the side of a sordid Arab hut. The Christians have broken away parts of two great sculptured blocks to lodge an arch, which looks hideous. Wherever, in these two islands, the intaglios are filled up with mud, and the reliefs and paintings covered with clay, it is the work of the Christians, who took possession of the temples of the region for their worship.

I could not leave the high grounds of this island while the sun lighted the map-like expanse below and around me. The chaotic rocks, the desert, river, and distant settlements would have absorbed me at any other time : but now, to the south, lay the Holy Island, beyond the gold-crowned palms which waved below my feet, and beyond the piled rocks and clear shadowy river which interposed. The plan of its edifices was clear under my eye ; and their superb range was fully displayed, as the sunlight was leaving their colonnades, moment by moment, and at last lingering only on the summits of the propyla. When the last ray melted into the glow which succeeds the sunset, we hastened down to the boat, and rowed over to Philœ, to the eastern cove, below the hypæthral temple, where we had moored this day fortnight, on our way up.—There was still time, before the twilight was gone, for a run up to the temples. I came down again, amazed at the vastness of the sculptures on the

propyla, and oppressed by a sense of the mass and the intricacy of the edifices. I felt, as I had done twice before, lost among them. But this perplexity was dispelled, and the whole arrangement made clear, by the careful study of the next day.

We all rose early on the morning of the 13th of January; and by half-past seven, we were up at the temples, having breakfasted, and sent away our kandjia, to descend the Cataract, and transfer the stores to the dahabieh.

I spent the first two hours quite alone,—setting out to learn the plan of the temples, but lingering at almost every step, impressed by the majesty of the *appareil* of worship, or bewitched by the beauty of the details of the adornments.

The confusion of temples of which travellers complain cannot arise from their number. The remains consist of the great temple of Isis with its accessories: a little chapel to Athor; a western chapel where the god Nilus is much honoured; a little chapel, modern, to Esculapius; the hypæthral temple vulgarly called Pharaoh's Bed; and various edifices of approach from the river. This is not so much to learn!—The confusion seems to me rather to arise from the absence of symmetry which, remarkable elsewhere in Egypt, is singularly striking here. I ventured upon making a plan, by the eye and a rough measurement, that I might not hereafter disbelieve the extraordinary perverseness of the arrangements. As this plan lies before me, I see that the propyla do not agree with each other; nor with the colonnade in the avenue; nor with those in the area. No two chambers are of the same size. The

doorways do not answer to each other, any more than the columns. There is a total want of coherence of parts. This is not only an impediment to understanding the edifices, but it causes incessant vexation to the eye, which is baulked of a view through gateways, and offended by twists and false measurements. This peculiarity once allowed for, I do not think the group of temples difficult to understand.

The first requisite to a fit survey of the Holy Island and its remains is a knowledge of why the place is so holy. And in order to understand why the place is so holy, it is necessary to be informed of the history and offices of Osiris.—I wish I might hope that any of my readers,—any who have not travelled in Egypt,—could be at all impressed with the seriousness of this subject. To my mind, no subject is so solemn as that of the faith of any race of men,—their sustaining and actuating faith,—be its objects what they may. And the objects of a sustaining and actuating faith must always be solemn and noble. Whatever their names may be, they have in them a majesty and endearment which place completely in the wrong all who ignorantly abhor or despise them. How ignorant and how guilty we ourselves may have been in our careless contempt of the idolatries of the world, we may come to perceive, when we have learned to do as we would be done by in separating the Ideas of any faith from its outward celebrations,—its philosophy from its corruptions;—and when we become wise enough to discern the close relations which we have now reason to believe exist among all the effectual faiths which have ever operated widely upon mankind. How serious a research that is which

would discover the attributes and functions of ancient deities, one may partly feel in contrasting the glibness with which the hallowed name of Osiris slips off the modern tongue with the reserve of old Herodotus, who, like other serious-minded men of his time, could not bring himself to name Osiris at all. I am aware of something of the same contrast in myself. Before I went to Egypt, I talked of the deities of that old nation as school children talk of Neptune and Apollo; as once fanciful personages who have become mere poetical images. It is very different now. As I read old Herodotus on the spot, the awe which made him dumb where I most wished him to speak, thrilled through me. There the calm benign gods were no poetical images, but embodied aspirations of the loftiest powers of man. There, the altars were no mere blocks of disenchanted stone, but the still inviolable depositories of the reverence, gratitude, and hope of whole races of thoughtful human beings, who here acknowledged One unutterable Eternal Being, through whose Attributes they lived, and moved, and had their being. —We are apt, at home, to suppose that language to us sacred from religious associations is either exclusively ours, or could not have meant the same to people living before our form of faith arose. But what should we say to such a supposition on the part of a more advanced race succeeding ourselves? Ought not they to admit the sacredness to us of our sacred language? And are we not bound to admit the sacredness to the old Egyptians of the devotional language which we find inscribed in the Holy Chambers of their temples, and which is delivered to us from out of the records of

their faith?—This is not claiming parity of value for their objects of faith and ours. It has nothing to do with the comparative elevation, purity and promise of any two faiths. It is merely a claim that the old Egyptians should be regarded as having a faith; a faith to which they might refer the loftiest ideas of a high order of intellect, and in which they might repose the affections of their common human heart.—Without a clear admission of this much, in that spirit of brotherhood which should unite us with the distant in time as truly as with the distant in space, there is no use in inquiring into the history and offices of Osiris, or of any other object of worship.

Different districts of the great valley assigned their higher honours to different gods: but Osiris, Isis, and their son Horus were generally held in the deepest reverence. I believe that, except the Supreme, Osiris was the only deity who was never named. When Herodotus has described the scourgings and lamentings which follow the sacrifices at the feast of Isis, he adds * that it is not permitted to him to tell in whose honour they scourge themselves and lament. And again, in describing the images of the dead, prepared for the guidance of the embalming process, Herodotus says† that the best represents, as he is told, Him whose name he has an objection to utter. And thus he always speaks of Osiris, by reverent allusion, and never by name.—The reason of this peculiar sacredness of Osiris, above all gods but the Supreme, was his office of Judge of the living and the dead. That which made him so universally and eminently adored was his being the repre-

* Herod. II. 61.

† Herod. II. 86.

sentation, or rather the incarnation, of the Goodness of the Supreme. The plurality of deities in Egypt arose from the practice, for popular use, of deifying the attributes of the Supreme God. We have thus seen his creative Spirit or Will embodied in one god; and the creative art,—or Artisan Intellect,—in another: and we shall meet with more. His primary attribute, his Goodness, was embodied in Osiris,* who left his place in the presence of the Supreme, took a human form, (though not becoming a human being),† went about the world, doing good to men, sank into death in a conflict with the Power of Evil;‡ rose up to spread blessings over the land of Egypt and the world, and was appointed Judge of the Dead,§ and Lord of the heavenly region, while present with his true worshippers on earth, to do them good. Such were the history and functions of Osiris, as devoutly recorded by the Egyptians of several thousand years ago. And here, in Philæ, was his sepulchre, where the faithful came in pilgrimage, from the mighty Pharaoh to the despised goat-herd, for a long course of centuries.—He was especially adored for other reasons than his benefactions: as being the only manifestation on earth of the Supreme God. This made him superior to the Eight great gods, after whom he ranked on other accounts.|| How the manifestation was made in a human form without an adoption of human nature, was one of the chief Egyptian mysteries;¶ the ideas of which will now, I fear, never be offered to our

* Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians, IV. 189.

† Ibid., IV. 317.

‡ Ibid., IV. 189.

§ Ibid., IV., 314.

|| Ibid., IV. 317.

¶ Ibid., IV., 317.

apprehension.—Upon his death, he passed into the region of the dead,—(borne there, as the sculptures represent, by the four genii of Hades)—and then, having passed through its stages, was raised to the function of Judge.*

Among the allusive names of Osiris were those of "Opener of good,"† "Manifester of grace," and "Revealer of truth:" and the description of him was, in the ancient words, "full of grace and truth."‡ He obtained the victory after his death over the Evil Principle which had destroyed him:§ and it was in his name, which they then assumed, that the virtuous, after judgment, entered into the state of blessedness which they shared with him.¶ The departed, men and women alike, were called Osiris: this spiritual name betokening that they were now in that state where sex was abolished, where no marriage existed, but human beings had become pure as the heaven-born inhabitants.||

When it is said that Osiris was the only manifestation of the Supreme upon earth, it must be understood that this means the only manifestation by a native heavenly resident. For all animated beings were supposed to be emanations from the Centre of Life.¶¶ The great Emanation doctrine which has spread so far over the world was certainly a chief point of faith in Egypt at a very early date; and it is believed that Pythagoras, recognising it in all their observances which were expositions of doctrine, adopted it from them, and thence

* Plutarch de Iside, s. 35, cited by Wilkinson, *Ancient Egyptians*, IV., 320.

† Plut. de Is. I. s. 42.

‡ Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, IV. 189.

§ Ibid. IV. 320.

|| Ibid. IV. 316.

¶¶ Ibid. IV. 316.

sent it on through distant countries and future ages. Plutarch ascribes to the belief of this doctrine the peculiar observances with regard to animals in Egypt. The passage is too well known to need citing here: but it is valuable, not only as testifying to this great fact of the Egyptian mind, but as showing that persons comparatively ancient were wiser than too many of ourselves in seeing in their practice of what we call Brute worship something deeper and more serious than we have been taught to look for. Plutarch cites Herodotus as saying that whatever beings have been endowed with life and any measure of reason are to be regarded as effluxes, or portions of the supreme wisdom which governs the universe: so that the Deity is not less strikingly represented in these than in images of any kind made by the hand of man.—Porphyry declares “the Egyptians perceived that the Divinity entered not the human body only, and that the Soul dwelt not, while on earth, in man alone, but passed in a measure through all animals.”—Thus Osiris was not the only manifestation of the universal Soul; and so far shared the lot of the humblest worm bred in the mud of the Nile; but he was the only member of the heavenly society, the only one of the sons of the Supreme, who came upon earth to make him known: and he thus took rank above them all.

It is impossible not to perceive that Osiris was to the old Egyptians what the Messiah is to be to the Jews; and what Another has been to the Christians. The nature, character and offices of Osiris, and the sacred language concerning him are so coincident with those most interesting to Christians as to compel a very

careful attention on the part of inquirers into Egyptian antiquities. Various solutions of the extraordinary fact have been offered. Some who hold to the literal historical truth of the book of Genesis suggest, as their conjecture, that Noah may have foreknown every thing relating to the coming of Christ, even to the language which should be used concerning him by sacred writers: and that his descendants may have communicated all this to the ancient Egyptians, who made a god out of the prophecy and its adjuncts.* Others have endeavoured to make out such personal intercourse between Pythagoras and some of the Hebrew prophets on the one hand, and the Egyptian priests on the other, as might account for the parallelism in question.† Others would have us understand it by concluding that the latest Egyptian priests were disciples of Plato, and put their own Platonising interpretations on the character of Osiris, as the Platonising Christians did on that of Christ. Others again, who see that Ideas are the highest subject of human cognisance, the history of Ideas the only true history, and a common holding of Ideas the only real relation of human beings to each other, believe that this great constellation of Ideas is one and the same to all these different peoples; was sacred to them all in turn, and became more noble and more glorious to men's minds as their minds became strengthened by the nourishment and exercise of ages.—It is a fact which ought to be attended to while considering the various solutions offered, that the character and offices of Osiris were certainly the same in the

* Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians*, IV. 188.

† Bayle, *Art. Pythagoras*, Note *h*.

centuries which preceded the birth of Abraham,—in the very earliest times known to us,—as after the deaths of Pythagoras and Plato. This is proved by the sculptures in the oldest monuments. We see in the tombs contemporary with the Pyramids that Osiris was to men then living the same Benefactor and final Judge that he was to the subjects of the Ptolemies.*

As Osiris was the manifestation of the Goodness of the Supreme Being, he was naturally identified with the most obvious benefits for which the old Egyptians desired to be thankful: and to them the greatest of benefits was the Nile. Hence arose one of their most beautiful traditionary fictions; that his body was deposited in the Cataract, whence he arose once a year, to spread blessings over the earth. Hence he was called also the author of agriculture, as the inundation may be well considered. Hence he is made to say, in one of the most ancient inscriptions, that he is the Eldest son of Time, and cousin to the Day; and that there is no place where he has not been, distributing his benefits to all mankind.†

It appears that the antagonism of Good and Evil was not very early recognised in Egypt. At first, Typho was called the brother of Osiris; and good and evil were supposed to be nearly related, and both claiming homage, as necessary and therefore worthy of acceptance. When the god of Evil came to be hated, his sacrifices began to be discontinued, and we even find his images carefully obliterated. He then became the murderer of Osiris, and was in league with Antœ, of whom we have before seen something, and

* Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians, IV. 323.

† Ibid.

who represented the sand of the Desert. This was an old feud,—this that we witness in our day, between the Nile and the Desert! Osiris declares himself, in the old inscription, “cousin to the Day;” and Typho was the god of the Eclipse. Thus, as the old Egyptian philosophy declined, and the corruption crept in which is the invariable consequence of polytheism, the brotherhood of the two Attributes grew into antagonism, and Typho became the hated and ugly monster that we see him in the sculptures,—the Satan of the Nile valley, with the ravaging hippopotamus for his symbol.

It was in his office of Judge of the dead that Osiris was presented to the minds of Egyptian guests at their banquets, in the mode of a mummy, which was carried round, as Herodotus says,* after the feast, to remind every one of his mortality. His name might not be uttered; but his idea was to be ever present. The Greeks gave their own turn to this observance, as Anacreon shows us, and used this *memento mori* as an incentive to the more eager pursuit of transient pleasure. The Egyptians were more serious-minded, and at the same time more cheerful in their views of death. Their view seems to have been that which Thales is wondered at for having professed, and which he probably adopted while in Egypt, that there is nothing to choose between Life and Death. The accounts of the saying uttered during the ceremony vary,—as perhaps the exhortations themselves varied in course of time. According to Herodotus, it was “Look at this man: you will be like him when

* Herod. II. 78.

you are dead. Drink now, and enjoy yourselves." Plutarch gives it more gravely. The guest was told that men ought "to love one another, and avoid those evils which tend to make them consider life too long, when in reality it is too short." Whatever was said, Osiris was offered to the eye, with his insignia of judgment, the crosier and flagellum, in his hands.

Osiris was said to have forty-nine titles: Isis ten thousand.* We see her now in her temple at Philæ, as the mourning widow of Osiris, and the mother of Horus. She was the daughter of Seb, or Time; and therefore the sister of Osiris: and it is said that the practice, not uncommon among the priests, and far too common among the Ptolemies, of marrying their sisters, arose from the example of this pair;—from its being supposed that such marriages must be fortunate. We sometimes see Isis as the Land of Egypt, when Osiris is rising from the river. She is the Protectress of Osiris, covering his corpse with her wings. This is a beautiful representation of her, and one which I was never tired of meeting. Sometimes she is nursing Horus. But her most important office is that of colleague of Osiris in the judgment of the dead. From her, in this office, the Greeks directly derived their Hecate; her office being not only the same, but her name standing inscribed at this day "Isis, the potent Hekte."† As the bringer to judgment, she is sometimes called the Giver of Death, and crowned with the asp. Herodotus says that the Egyptians regarded Isis as the greatest of all the divinities.‡ It

* Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians, IV. 321, 317.

† Ibid., IV. 384, 369, 367.

‡ Herod. II. 40.

might be so in his age : and her festivals, as witnessed by him, were no doubt very majestic : but there is no reason to believe that in an older time she was so much honoured as the deities who represented a higher Ideal.—The heifer was held sacred to Isis ; and no heifer was ever permitted to be slaughtered in Egypt.* The young Horus, her infant, was adopted by the Greeks and called Harpocrates and made the god of silence by his finger being on his lips. The Egyptian “ Hor,” however, seems to signify childhood, in the sense of entrance or re-entrance upon life ; of production or reproduction.† In Hades, he appears seated on a lotus, before the throne of Osiris, and in front of the candidate for judgment. He is the child, or new life, of the region beyond the tomb. The lotus, on which the child is seated, is reproductive in a singular manner, as Payne Knight tells us,‡—by new flowers springing from seeds which could not escape from their sheaths. Isis is perpetually seen holding the stem of the lotus : and the lotus pillar, common everywhere in Egypt, abounds especially at Philœ. It is a remarkable fact, told us by Payne Knight, that Isis, with Horus on her lap, is found on a Lapland drum, and also in ancient Muscovite worship : and with a golden heifer for a symbol of worship, or idol.§ The Lapland goddess Isa or Disa is symbolised also by a pyramid, with the Egyptian emblem of Life (the most sacred of Egyptian symbols) on the apex.|| How the ancient

* Larcher. Note on Herod. II. 41.

† Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians, IV. 407.

‡ Inquiry into the Symbolic Language of Ancient Art and Mythology.
—*Classical Journal*.

§ Ibid.

|| Ibid.

faiths and their symbols became spread over the world, from the Ganges to Yucatan, is a question too deep and wide for us to enter on here: but if any portion had a better chance than another of diffusion by the intercourses of men, it was such as related to Osiris, Isis and Horus; not only by their congeniality with universal ideas, but by means of the concourse of strangers who for many centuries came in pilgrimage to these holy islands of Biggeh and Philæ; at one time the most enlightened spots in the known world.

The most interesting part to me of this beautiful group of temples was a chamber reached from the roof, always retired and somewhat difficult of access, which represents the death and resurrection of Osiris. This chamber is nearly over the western adytum, forming an upper story of the Holy Place. Here is sculptured the mourning of Osiris, and his embalming, funereal transit, reception by the spirits of Hades, and final investiture as Judge of the Dead.—The next most interesting portion is the birth of Horus,—to which subject the western temple is devoted. The Christians have made sad havoc here, with their mud-plastering; but significant portions may be made out; and at the end sufficient clearance has been effected to bring out the beautiful group of Isis with Horus on her knees, receiving homage on all hands, the guardian hawk overhead being surrounded with a glory of radiating water-plants.

What a symbol is this defacement itself of that action of the infirm human mind which is for ever obliterating, as far as it can, all ideas but its own! How faithless, in fact, as well as ignorant, is that zeal

which would extinguish as dangerous all conceptions but those which suit its own transient needs, and which considers as false and doomed to destruction all ideas and all expressions of them which are not at the moment present to themselves! And how great is the symbolical encouragement here in the durability of the old representations, and the ineffectual character of the defacement! These Christians flattered themselves that they had buried away for ever those old gods of Egypt, and driven out the whole time-honoured group, to make way for their saints. They thought the thing was done when they had put a yellow halo over the lotus-glory; and the dove over the hawk; and St. Peter with his keys of heaven over Phthah with his key of life; and angels with their palm-branches over the Assessors of the dead with their feather-symbols of Integrity: as the Puritans of modern times supposed they had destroyed superstition by burning altar-pieces and stripping cathedrals. But such extinction, being no man's business, is in no man's power. The mud plaster can be cleared away; and the old gods reappear, serene and beautiful, and almost as venerable as ever to those who can discern their ideal through their forms: and it may be that their worship is as lively as ever in the hearts of those who regard them (as their best worshippers always did regard them) as imperishable ideas presented in forms congenial to their times. The Christian saints, with their halos, keys, palms, and books share the same privilege. No narrow puritan zeal can abolish them. In as far as they embody spiritual truth, they must share the immortality of truth:—exactly so far, and no further. Meantime, we

who have stood before the plastered walls of Philæ, and the ruins of Catholic churches, cannot escape the admonition they convey;—to accept the truth which comes to us without daring to interfere with what comes (as *they* believe) to others: to enjoy our brightening dawn, without trying to put out the moon and stars; which would not have existed, if they had not been wanted by some beings beyond our jurisdiction, and in some place beyond our ken.

The order of the edifices at Philæ may be shortly given, and I hope clearly.

Beginning from the southern shore, where there was once a flight of steps from the water, and a quay, we find first, on the left (west) hand, a sandstone pillar, whose fellow was brought to England by Mr. Bankes. This latter is remarkable as bearing inscribed the petition of the priests of Philæ to Ptolemy Physcon, entreating him to lessen the concourse of people of rank and strangers, who lived on the hospitality of the priests while there. The answer of the king, including an order to the government of the Thebaïd not to permit the priests to be thus encroached upon, was painted on the same pedestal. From the remaining pillar a colonnade extends, continuous on the west side, to the great propyla. The thirty pillars of this western corridor are all unlike each other in the sprouting of their capitals, while the outline is symmetrical enough to avoid offence to the eye. All the vegetation represented is indigenous; the different kinds of palms, water-plants, acacia, tobacco, &c. affording a sufficient variety. Some of the shafts bear hieroglyphic inscriptions, and some are plain. The intercolumnar

screens, and the walls behind the pillars, are covered with sculptures. As I have mentioned before, this colonnade is so curved as to prevent the landing place and the portal of the propyla being seen from each other :—a great blemish, in modern eyes. The eastern colonnade is unfinished, and the part next the river is in ruins ; amidst which ruins stands the little temple of Esculapius ;—of course, a modern affair. Its Greek dedication bears the name of the fifth Ptolemy. Of the sixteen pillars standing of the eastern colonnade, few have finished capitals ; and their shafts, and the wall behind, are plain.—The avenue between the two rows of columns is cruelly spoiled with the ruins of a mud village : among which lie two headless sphinxes.

We now come to the great propylon, whose massive pyramidal towers are the first object seen in coming up the river. These towers are built upon and beside the ancient gateway of the time of the Pharaohs. Champollion found the name of Nectanebo on this portal, and on a small chapel, dedicated to Athor, in the avenue. These are the only ancient remains, the rest of the great old temple having been overthrown by the Persians, who were scandalised at the idea of worship being carried on anywhere but in the open air. The Ptolemies rebuilt the temple, preserving the Egyptian style much more carefully than in most of their edifices. This old gateway looks very venerable, with its antique winged globe on the cornice. A smaller entrance through the great propylon,—a portal on the left (west) hand of the ancient one, leads to the temple I mentioned as appropriated to the welcome of Horus. This temple is built separately, surrounded by pillars bearing

the head of Isis for their capitals; and merely joined on to the propyla at each extremity by a gateway.

This temple forming the western side of the area within the great propylon, a row of chambers forms the eastern side. These chambers are small, few of them sculptured, and their wall, looking upon the area, rough and unfinished. The ten columns of its corridor answer to the seven of the opposite temple of Horus:—such is the want of symmetry here!

Passing through this area, and the gate of the inner and smaller propylon, we enter the court of the ten celebrated colossal columns. These columns are in pairs as to their design, but not in their position! They support the roof which covers half the court: the other half of which is open to the sky. The ceiling is still brightly coloured, as are the ten columns. They are completely covered with sculptures, which shine in a variety of blues and reds, and the pale green which is so beautiful everywhere. The walls here, and in all the succeeding chambers, are completely covered with rich painted sculptures, whose compartments are divided by borders which are not merely decorative, but emblematic also. To the uninitiated eye, these decorations are what we commonly call Greek borders,—with no more meaning than so many strips of colour. But to their beauty they add meanings such as we never think of embodying in decoration, while we have the printing-press and engraving to communicate our ideas by. Here every morsel of decoration, is a message or admonition. While by the principle of repetition, (the value of which the Egyptians understood so well) the best decorative effect is produced, every element employed

speaks its own meaning to the mind ;—or did to the minds of ancient visitors. Here we have the lotus,—alternate bud and leaf stem,—(from which our common iron palisading is copied)—and there the drooping cup :—here the ibis ; and there the wild-duck and reeds :—here the symbols of purity and stability in alternation ; and there, those of life and power. These borders run everywhere, and fill up all spaces not required for more special appeals to the worshipping mind.

To this court succeeds a corridor which leads round the corner of the next chamber, to an entrance to some vaults. The entrance is a mere pit ; and the gentlemen could not get far in the subterranean chambers, for want of light. Beyond the corridor lie two chambers, for once, with doors answering to each other. Instead of one Holy Place, there are two : an unusual circumstance, but not a singular one. We found the same, and also two portals, at Kóm Umboo, where the temple is dedicated to two deities. The western adytum here is very dark, and smaller than the other ; and its walls are so plastered over with mud as hardly to leave any indications of the devices. The eastern adytum was in much the same condition : but some happy cleaning has laid open a beautiful group, of Osiris, and Isis nursing Horus, with an attendant behind. The faces of mother and child are fresh and pleasing.

This account will give some idea of the arrangement of the great temple of Isis at Philæ. I have said nothing of several lateral chambers, and erections on the roof, which have no immediate connexion with the general plan. I went wherever it was possible to go,—on the roof, and to the top of both propyla : so that the

confusion I had felt so painfully before disappeared under the study from the heights of the edifice.

As for the external buildings,—there is a little temple on the western bank filled with the pictured feats and honours of the god Nilus, who is there for ever at his favourite work of binding up his water plants.—On the eastern side, there was once a fine portal of approach which is now filled up nearly to the capitals of its columns, and built up between those capitals, and thus made into a wretched Arab hovel. As it was empty, and had sculptures, and the capitals were beautiful, I went in, and was presently surprised by darkness. A man, woman and boy had blocked up the entrance by sitting down outside on the mud heap which nearly occupied the space. They demanded baksheesh in a very different tone from that which they would have employed if our dragoman or the gentlemen had been in view. The woman slipped in, and laid hold of me, trying to wrench my gold pencil-case out of my hand, while the man and boy spread themselves so as still to cover the entrance. I knew, however, at what peril any body in Egypt robs a stranger, and that I was perfectly safe. I gave these people nothing, and got away safe by insisting on a passage over the mud heap. As I emerged, the trio ran away, and I saw no more of them.

I found my party preparing to lunch on the terrace of the temple called Pharaoh's Bed. This temple was built with a view to its aspect from the river; and truly, the Ptolemies and Cæsars have given a fine object to voyagers who gaze up at Philæ. We who live in an English climate can hardly reconcile our unaccustomed taste to a hypæthral building anywhere;

the only building of that kind that we have at home being the village Pound ; and walls without roof not answering to our idea of an edifice at all. But I felt here, and at night, how strong is the temptation to abstain from roofing public buildings, when, above the canopy of the clear air, there are the circling stars to light them. When I saw this temple roofed with Orion and Aldebaran, I could ask for nothing better.

I went three times round the whole outside of the temples, so as to obtain some permanent impression of the immense array of gods, offerers, cartouches and legends.—I saw here, for the first time, a front face among the sculptures ;—a proof of their not being ancient. It was the middle face in more than one group of captives, whom the conqueror was holding by the hair, preparatory to cutting off their heads.

On a plain space of wall is inscribed the Latitude and Longitude of Philæ, as ascertained by the French Commissioners whose names are appended. The same service is much wanted higher up the river.—There are inscriptions in different parts of the temple recording the visits of the expedition sent here by Gregory XVI., and of the French republican army under Dessaix in 1799.

At last, it was time to go ;—absolutely necessary to go ; for the boat was waiting which was to take us to Mahatta. We returned again and again to verify points on which we were not, on first comparing notes, fully agreed : but this lingering must come to an end. We could yet see Philæ for some time : and how different it looked now when we understood every angle and every recess ! At last we rounded the point

which intervenes between Philæ and Mahatta; and we saw the Holy Island no more. "By Him who sleeps in Philæ," I vowed never to part with its image from my interior picture-gallery.

At Mahatta we found asses awaiting us, in the care of two of our crew who had remained with the Dahabieh. Of these, the Buck was one; and his glee at seeing us again was uncontrollable. He shook hands with us all at great length; and kept up a most vigorous pantomime all the way to Aswán. He had dressed himself as splendidly as was in his power. Where his blue shirt had been cut to strips by repeated floggings, he had inserted a large square white patch. He wore prodigious yellow slippers, and a clean white turban: and he had dyed his nails with henné.

We enjoyed our ride through the Desert to Aswán, and our re-entrance there upon the comforts of our spacious dahabieh. We had visitors to receive, and visits to make, this evening; and on the middle of the next day (January 14th) we set off down the river,—with our heads full of Thebes.

CHAPTER XIII.

KÓM UMBOO.—QUARRIES OF SILSILEH.—ADFOO.—EILE-
THYIA.—OLD EGYPTIAN LIFE.—ISNA.—ARMENT.

FOUR days and several temples lay, however, between us and Thebes. I will hasten over these temples, observing only their distinguishing characteristics; for I am aware that there is all the difference in the world between painfully putting together in the imagination the details of a written description of such objects, and calling up without effort that bright and solemn image of these marvellous old monuments which remains in the minds of those who have visited them.

We arrived off Kóm Umboo at ten at night of the day we left Aswán: and early in the morning we were up at the temples.

The principal temple here was rebuilt by the Ptolemies on the site of an ancient one bearing the date of the Pharaohs of an early part of the Third Period. The only piece of this great antiquity remaining is a gateway dedicated to Savak, the Lord of Umboo. The larger temple is dedicated to him and to Aroeris, the brother of Osiris: and there are two entrances, each with the winged globe on its cornice; and there were two adyta, side by side. They are buried and lost; but the cornices of their portals are just visible above the

sand. This son of Time, Aroeris, is the god of Light; and his colleague Savak is a local deity of the Sun, bearing rule over this southern region, but hated by the former inhabitants of the next region to the north, who waged a savage war with his worshippers, on account of him;—in much the same spirit apparently as the Catholics of our middle ages with the Moham-medans, or the Puritans of our later age with the Catholics: that is, with the passion which seems peculiarly to belong to a faith too intense for its comprehensiveness. No wars are so cruel as wars for religion: and this warfare appears to be the only one in old Egypt in which the combatants are charged (whether falsely or not) with having eaten their enemies. The hawk and the crocodile are the symbols of Aroeris and Savak: and they are found in companionship in every part of the sculptures of this temple.—The thick grove of columns here has a very imposing effect; and the mass of overthrown blocks makes one doubt whether any force short of an earthquake could have been the destructive agent here.

One curious architectural device of the Egyptians, which we found almost everywhere by looking for it, is here apparent at a glance, when one stands on the great circuit wall which incloses the whole group of edifices;—their plan of regularly diminishing the size of the inner chambers, so as to give, from the entrance, an appearance of a longer perspective than exists. They evidently liked an ascending ground, the ascent of which was disguised as much as possible by the use of extremely shallow steps. The roof was made to descend in a greater degree, the descent being con-

cealed inside by the large cornices and deep architraves they employed. The sides were made to draw in; and thus the Holy Place was always small; while to those who looked towards it from the outer chambers, (and it was entered by the priests alone) it appeared, not small, but distant. I had observed this in some of the Nubian temples, when looking at them sideways from a distance; but here it was particularly evident; the roof descending in deep steps from the portico to the pronaos; from the naos to the corridors; and from the corridors to the adyta; which last were level with the sand.

When I was in the portico, looking up at the architraves, I saw into another ancient secret, which I should have been sorry to have overlooked. Some of the paintings were half-finished; and their ground was still covered with the intersecting red lines by which the artists secured their proportions. These guiding lines were meant to have been effaced as soon as the outlines were completed; yet here they are at the end of, at least, two thousand years! No hand, however light, has touched them, through all the intervening generations of men:—no rains have washed them out, during all the changing seasons that have passed over them:—no damp has moulded them: no curiosity has meddled with them. It is as if the artist had lain down for his siesta, with his tools beside his hand, and would be up presently to resume his work: yet that artist has been a mummy, lying somewhere in the heart of the neighbouring hills, ever since the time when our island was bristling with forests, and its inhabitants were dressed in skins, and dyed their bodies blue with woad, to look terrible in battle. In another

part of this temple, the stone is diced in small squares, to receive the hieroglyphic figures.

The other temple was built on an artificial platform, and must have looked nobly from the river, as indeed its remains still do by moonlight. I found among the strewn fragments one capital, and only one, bearing the head of Athor,—the last relic perhaps of a colonnade which here crowned the precipitous bank. My journal records that we were much impressed by these ruins,—the size of the parts, and the extraordinary character of their wreck. The wading among blocks of sculptured stone, having the eye caught incessantly by some exquisite device or gay bit of painting, is a strange experience. So far from becoming tired of temple-haunting, we found the eagerness grow from day to day.

In the afternoon, we plunged back into the times of the old Pharaohs,—into the early centuries of the Third Period. We went over the quarries at Silsileh, and saw excavations which might almost make us think that the whole human race had come here for building material, from the founding of Babel to the arrival of the lazy Arabs. On the east side, I wandered long and far among lanes and areas in the rock, where the *sidés* spring up like the walls of a mine, or retire in sharp cut gradation, to a mountainous height. All the variety I came upon in this silent wilderness of cut stone, was the tracks of a hyæna in the sand, and the marks in the rock of the tools of three or four thousand years ago. Some of these marks were evidently for the purpose of trying tools. The marks remain; but we long in vain to know what the tools were like. Others seem to have been made in sport; perhaps in

illustration of some story the workmen were telling and listening to, while eating their lentil pottage. On the western bank we found much more ;—grottoes, pillars, tablets, niches, statues, sculptures and paintings,—all of very ancient date. We have the conquering Pharaoh—Horus, successor of Amunoph III., overriding the Ethiopians, receiving the captives, whose arms are tied in all manner of ways,—some with the elbows above their heads ;—and holding groups of the foe by the hair, threatening to cut off their heads. We see him borne in a shrine on men's shoulders, with files of soldiers in attendance, and the lion pacing along beside the royal chariot.—In another place we have the most solemn representation those old artists knew how to offer ;—the king receiving the symbol of Life from the Supreme god.

The historian revels among such memorials as these. The invariable practice here of sculpturing the names and titles of the kings, and often of their chief officers ; and the descriptions of the people conquered ; and the names of offerers as well as gods, makes research here a self-rewarding effort, very unlike the painful and uncertain speculation which is all that can be attempted among the antiquities of more modern countries. To the historian, such places as these are a glorious field : but they are not less interesting to the moralist or the poet. What a proof it is of the sanctity of the work of temple-building that the very quarries were consecrated to the gods ! Truly, they were a religious people, these old Egyptians :—receiving their children as from the gods ; bringing their children to the temples in bands to make offerings ; invoking

the Judge of the dead at their banquets; presenting their conquests as sacrifice to the heavenly powers; and consecrating their work of temple-building by first making the very rocks holy which were to furnish the material. There is a great congregation of gods here, receiving offerings from several Pharaohs. Savak is the local deity: and the god Nilus holds a higher rank than usual: some think because the river here narrows between the rocks, and runs with a strong current: and others because much of the stone cut here for distant works, was committed to the charge of Nilus for transport.—The tablets bear some inscriptions of great historical value; and particularly a record of Assemblies held in various years of the reign of the Great Ramases. What these Assemblies were, in their object and details, perhaps some future decipherer of Egyptian records will tell us. At present we know only that they were held in the great halls of the temples, and were considered of the utmost importance; so that the title of President of the Assemblies was one of the highest dignity, offered to the king alone on earth, and supposed to be enjoyed by the gods in their own regions.*

We set off after breakfast, on the morning of the 16th, to see the great Adfoo temple, walking about a mile through millet patches, stubble and dust. From our deck we had seen what looked like clouds of smoke rising from the town, and partly obscuring the great propyla. When we reached the edifice this appearance was explained in a way which pleased us very much. The people were carrying off the dust from the area of

* Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians, V. 288.

the temple, to qualify the rich mud of the shore : and donkeys were passing in and out under the entrance gate. Men were loading their asses within the area ; and we found the place wonderfully improved since our former visit. We could still handle the capitals of the tallest columns by walking on the sand between them ; but the western colonnade and area wall were cleared almost to their bases. The external sculptures of the propylon indicate, however, that much remains to be done ; for the captive groups, whose heads the victor is threatening, hardly show their noses above ground. The process which was going forward of course covered us with dust ; but we rejoiced in it, for the sake of the good done ; if only the Arabs do not fill the court with something worse than even this dust ;—with such mud hovels as are stuck all over the roofs, and ruin the outline of this magnificent temple. —The dust was of the less consequence to some of us that we were destined to be at all events half-choked. The temple chambers can be reached only by going down a hole like the entrance to a coal-cellar, and crawling about, like crocodiles, on the sand within, there being barely room, in some places, to squeeze one's prostrate body between the dust and the roof, with a huge capital of a pillar on either hand. The having to carry lights, under penalty of one's own extinction in the noisome air and darkness if they go out, much complicates the difficulty ; so that a proper visit to the interior of the Adfoo temple is really something of an adventure. I could not, under the circumstances, trace out the disposition of the building : but five gentlemen, the dragoman and I, pene-

trated a considerable way;—as far indeed as it was possible to go; traversing, it seemed to me, three chambers, and ending in one which, from its oblong form, I should have supposed to be a corridor; but which, having apparently but one door, must, in that case, have been the adytum. The sculptures were clear and clean; but the place was too stifling, with half-a-dozen people and tallow candles in it, and no fresh air for many years, to admit of more than a rapid survey. The sculptures exhibited offerings to the gods; the offerers being Ptolemies. The temples at Adfoo were both erected by successive monarchs of that race; and the interest of this magnificent edifice is therefore rather owing to its being, from its durability, a model to us of the plan and structure of an Egyptian temple, and to the richness of its architecture and sculpture, than to any charm of antiquity.

Its extent and massive character are best perceived from the top of the propylon. For the beauty of the view beyond, too, every traveller should go there. The mass of temple buildings below is a fine centre for such a landscape. About this centre is gathered the poor town, whose fields spread to the river. Almost the whole wide circuit within the blue mountains, or yellow limestone hills on the horizon, is one bright green level. The only interruptions are from the winding river, and some pools among the western fields; pools at present, but canal at the time of the subsidence of the Nile.

As the morning was shady and cool, we returned on foot to the boat, where we shook off our dust, and wrote our journals, in preparation for new enterprises. The

winds were now less cold and strong than within the tropics: but we had frequent cloudy skies,—as to-day, for a short time. Towards evening, the sky cleared to the west; and the shore at El Kab, where we were mooring, was gorgeously lighted up by a parting gleam. —A strange-looking wall tempted us ashore; and we found that this circuit-wall of the vanished city of Eilethya, whose tombs we were to see to-morrow, was in fact a substantial fortification, containing a hollow-way between two stout masses of crude brick. This wall enclosed an area large enough for an extensive city: and a level stretches behind, from the wall to the mountains, which might, in the days of the prosperous old tillage, when Egypt was the granary of the world, easily support the population of the district.

The morning of the 17th was charming; most favourable for our ride to the tombs in the Desert. Our asses were of the smallest; so small that the gentlemen could help them on by using a walking-stick as they rode. I never before saw such a variety in the size and strength of animals of the same race, in near neighbourhood. To-day it was like riding a dog,—and in two days more, at Thebes, we were mounted on donkeys almost as large and strong as mules.

The arid plain that we rode over had drifts of stones which seemed to show that vehement torrents sometimes sweep down here from the hills. The recesses of the Desert are very striking,—so utterly still and dreary, with nothing but the blue shadows coming and going, from century to century. Here and there we passed to-day shallow pools of salt water; and there were crusts of natron on the soil.

We visited a very small and very ancient temple, about three miles from the river ; and two less antique, nearer the old town. But temples must be imposing indeed to obtain much attention here, where we come upon some old tombs for the first time. In the temples we have the worship and the wars of the old Egyptians. In some of the tombs, we have their thoughts of death, judgment and retribution : but in many we have their daily life, their occupations, their festivals and their mirth ; and these are interesting beyond description.

The tombs at Eilethyia are grottoes in the rock ; vaulted, and with ceilings elaborately painted. Some have a pit before the entrance ; some have pits within ; and others communicate with holes or low-roofed caverns where the dead might be deposited. The date is known by the names of several kings being inscribed in the most easterly tomb ; those kings being of the beginning of the Third Period, immediately after the expulsion of the Shepherds.

The moment of entering these tombs is that of a sudden withdrawing of the clouds which overhang those far distant ages. Hitherto, we have learned something of their devotional conceptions and feelings ; something of their philosophy ; and much of their arts of war and of building : but thus far we have learned nothing of the every-day life of common people, except that the offerings in the temples prove what they had to eat, drink, wear and use. Now, however, on entering these and other tombs, the dimness that overhangs the Nile valley clears away, and we see the people at work in the fields, and busy on the river, and merry in their houses. It is no dream,—no transient vision,—with

clouds driving up to hide it from us again. It is steady before our eyes, and we can take our time in studying it. We can note every article of dress; every instrument of music; and the very dishes preparing for dinner. How wonderful it is! And what a fortunate thing for us that it was the custom in Egypt for the owner of a tomb to paint it all over with pictures of his life, its possessions, its interests and its deeds!—Now let us see what this family are doing;—master, mistress, children and servants.

This is a rich man. With us, he would be a very rich man: and his possessions are such as would make him wealthy in any part of the world. The first we see of him is in the field where his labourers are ploughing and sowing: that is, his chariot is in the field; so he is no doubt overlooking his people. The inundation has of course subsided: and it appears that his land does not lie very low. If it did, he would hardly be setting his people to plough, but merely to sprinkle the seed on the slime;—to cast his bread upon the waters, that he might find it again, after many days. This plough, however, is a very simple affair; and not wanted to go very deep. A mere scratching of the surface is enough, in such a soil as this. If any stiff clods turn up, they are broken with the hoe: but that does not seem to be the case here; for the sower follows the ploughman pretty closely. Herodotus thought the Egyptians very enviable in his day for the ease with which their husbandry was managed. There were no people in the world, he says, who obtained their corn with less labour and pains. "They are not obliged to make toilsome furrows with the plough, to

break the clods, and to give to their fields the cares which the rest of men bestow; but when the river has of its own accord watered their lands, and the waters have retired, then everyone lets in his hogs, and afterwards sows his field. When the sowing is done, the oxen are driven upon the ground; and after these animals have buried the grain by trampling it in, there is only to await quietly the time of harvest." * There is nothing said here of the subsequent irrigation which is quite as toilsome a process as any ploughing in Greece could ever have been. What a waste of seed this sower is making,—unless that cataract of seed is a flourish of the artist's! He seems to throw more from his hand than any hand can hold,—or even the basket from which he takes his supply. If it has been "a good Nile" this year, here will be corn for export, after every one is well fed at home.—Ah! we shall soon see that: for here, in the second line of paintings, we are carried on to the harvest. The crops seem certainly very vigorous. This tallest growth is millet, of course: the next, barley; the shortest, wheat. They cut the wheat-ears off short with a sickle very like ours: but they pull up the millet by the roots. There is a woman uprooting it now. Probably they use the stalks for fencing, thatching, or bedding the cattle, as the country people do at this day. What is that man doing with the roots of the plucked millet? Is he knocking off the earth from them? That is a neat sheaf that his comrade is tying; and the man who is carrying another seems to find it large and heavy, as indeed it looks. That instrument, with teeth like a comb, seems to work

* Herod. II. 14.

cleverly in stripping off the grain from the stalk.—It is only the millet that is so treated; for here, in the third line, is the threshing-floor, with the oxen treading out the wheat. The driver is singing; and here is actually his song, written up beside his picture:—*

“Thresh for yourselves, O oxen! Thresh for yourselves.
Thresh for yourselves, O oxen! Thresh for yourselves.
Measures for yourselves! Measures for your masters.
Measures for yourselves! Measures for your masters.”

This is the song this driver was singing while Moses was a child.—The wheat is swept up, and delivered to the winnowers; who are making showers in the air with the falling wheat. And here it is carried to the place where the scribe is ready to see it measured and deposited in the granary.

These scribes look like very stiff writers. How formally they hold the tablet, supporting the left arm on the bent knee! and how hard they seem to be bearing on the style, as if it were steel, and they were engraving! But this is only a bit of energy put in by the artist; for the style was only a reed pen; and it made its marks with coloured inks.—But here are several scribes, taking account of many things besides the grain which is brought home.—These bags that they are causing to be weighed before them, are money bags. This must be a very rich man. Here are gold rings too;—the ancient form of currency.—And here is the live stock: cattle, asses, pigs, goats: what an array!—And the gentleman was a sportsman too, I suppose; or, at least, chose to have his table well supplied; for here are game, and geese, and fish. Probably, the Nile

* Champollion. Lettres sur l’Egypte, 11th and 12th letters.

left him plenty of fish within his embankments, when the waters retired: or he might keep fish-ponds stocked; as it appears some people did. The old Egyptians must have been very fond of fowling, judging by the number and variety of nets, and the multitude of fluttering birds which we see among the domestic pictures.—Ah! these people have taken more fish and geese than they want at present; and here we see them salting them. From what we saw ourselves just now, there must have been a good deal of salt produced in the neighbourhood: and if not enough for everybody, more was brought down the river by the traders from Ethiopia, where we know salt was brought from the east for sale.

Here is a wine-press:—no wonder! for we are coming presently to the picture of a banquet. We know that the kings and the priests were much restricted in the use of wine: but the sculptures and paintings show that there was much wine-bibbing among gentlemen and ladies generally. Every landed proprietor seems to have had his wine-press; as far as this kind of evidence goes: and the sick and tipsy guests at banquets are really a scandal to those old times.—By the way, those who had wine-presses must have had lands extending backwards to the skirts of the hills; for vines will not grow in the rich Nile mud, nor bear being laid under water for months at a time. The great valley must have been skirted with vineyards in those old times. Besides all that they grew, we know that they imported wine largely, as soon as they could get it. One way and another,—as medicine, or with their food, or at their banquets, they certainly disposed

of a great deal. And here are a group of servants, treading the grapes very energetically.

What a splendid affair this boat is, with its band of rowers, and its pavilion, with door and two windows;—quite a house!—and the gay sail, all chequered with bright colours! How well these people wove and dyed in those days! This sail is bulging, as if in a strong wind, which implies that it is stout as well as gay. What is this wheel, on the roof of the pavilion, and under the corner of the sail? For a long time I believed that this was part of the tackle; and I made a drawing of it for future inquiry. From Sir G. Wilkinson I learn * that I did not use my eyes well, or I might have seen that this is the wheel of a chariot, which is placed there for conveyance. I might have discovered this by the horses, whose heads appear in my sketch, in front of the pavilion. This other boat, rowing the contrary way, makes all clear. Here the sail and mast are down; and the chariot on the roof is unmistakeable; besides that the horses stand on the deck. The rudder is in shape an enormous paddle, swung on a pivot by a little man standing at the stern. How eager the pilot looks, making gestures from his place at the bow! These capacious and handsome boats,—vessels of a higher order than such as are represented among the chattels of ordinary landed proprietors,—make me hope that this is indeed the tomb of the old Egyptian admiral, which Champollion studied so successfully at Eilethya. His tablet tells that he was “*Chef des nautonniers*” in the reign of Thothmes I.; that he served in the earlier time of Amosis, and did battle to great purpose

* Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians, III. 197.

while he commanded on the water: and also that he was himself named Amosis.*—If this be indeed Amosis, he returned from his exploits on the water to a life of great plenty and some merriment on the shore.

Some merriment: for here is a grand banquet. The provision is various: quarters of beef, cakes, fruits, wine flasks, &c. And in the reception room, how decorous is every thing!—at least, before dinner! Here are the host and hostess, in a handsome chair, looking towards their guests, who are ranged in front, the gentlemen in one file; the ladies in another. Every lady is smelling at a large water-lily with all her might. To the host's chair a monkey is tied. Perhaps Amosis brought it home after one of his voyages up to the south. There is a row of musicians, playing on the harp and the double-pipe, and some clapping; by way of a little amusement before dinner.

But to all things there comes an end. We see here the day (how far back in the depths of time!) when these merry feasts were all over,—the lilies dead,—the music hushed,—the last of this man's harvests stored,—the last trip enjoyed by boat or chariot. The fish need no more fear him in their pools, nor the fowl among the reeds. Here he is lying under the hands of the embalmers; and next we see him in mummy form on the bier, in the consecrated boat which was to carry him over the dark river, and land him at the gates of the heavenly abode where the Spirits of the dead, and the Judge Osiris were awaiting him, to try his deeds, and pronounce his sentence for eternal good or ill.—Here are the life and death of a man who lived so long

* Lettres sur l'Egypte.

ago that at the first mention of him, we think of him as one having no kindred with us. But how like ours were his life and death! Compare him with a retired naval officer made country gentleman in our day, and in how much less do they differ than agree!

I was sorry to see carved,—actually cut,—among the sculptures of the easternmost tomb at Eilethyia, among the intrusions of many who knew no better, such names as these of Irby and Mangles, Belzoni, and Madden. If visitors must leave their names, why not do it on the rough rock by the entrance? Can there ever come a day, however far off, when it will not be a sin for strangers to carve their names all over the statuary in Westminster Abbey?

In the afternoon, between Eilethyia and Isna, we passed five boats with European flags;—one of which was Russian, and the rest English. The Russian countess was an English woman, moreover. I could not but hope that these travellers would not pronounce decisively on the scenery of Egypt, as observed from their boats; for they were too late in the season to see much without the effort of going often ashore. The river had sunk so much that we hardly recognised some districts, whose aspect appeared totally altered from what it was a few weeks before. We had missed the birds, while we were up in Nubia. We never saw again such myriads as filled the depths of the heavens when we set out on our voyage: but now we began to note large flights of them, increasing daily as we drew near the plain of Thebes.

I think I had better say little of Isna, whose temple is so universally praised that every one knows all

about it. Those have heard of it who are ignorant of almost every thing else about Egypt. If it were ancient, I could not refrain from giving my impressions of it: but the only relic of the old edifice supposed to exist is a small red door jamb, bearing date in the time of Thothmes I., mentioned by Champollion. The portico bears the names of the Cæsars: and, however greatly the world is obliged to them for erecting a very majestic and elegant temple, we are not aided by it in our researches into the affairs of the old Egyptians. The Pasha, as is known, cleared out the portico to the very bases of the columns: and a noble hall it now is. The amount of accumulation is shown by the height of the dust-hill we had to descend, from the alley in front of the temple. Our Rais shut out the children who came swarming after us, as usual; so that, for once, we explored a temple at our ease, in coolness and freedom, and without being asked for baksheesh.

If I were to enlarge on anything in regard to this temple, it would be the amount of inscriptions. But it is indescribable,—unrememberable,—incredible anywhere but on the spot. I have already said all that language can say on this point: and I will leave it.

There is a Zodiac here, as every one knows: not ancient. No Zodiac in Egypt is ancient; but one or two offer Egyptian symbols which it is interesting to notice:—the Scarabæus for the Crab: the double-headed Sphinx for the Twins: a truly Egyptian compound of an animal for the Seagoat: and a Man with the oriental water-skin,—the Goat or Kid-skin,—on his shoulder, for Aquarius.

I saw here first the Serpents, human-headed and

human-legged, of which we soon met so much more primitive and satisfactory a representation at Thebes. These Serpents and many other nondescripts abound in this temple; so that it looks like an illustration of much of the book of Revelations.—Here, for the first time, I saw the glorious Egyptian symbol of the Heavens;—the Long Arms of the goddess Pe encircling a whole compartment of the vast ceiling.

This 18th of January was remarkable for bringing us again among the dwellings and resorts of a town population, after our retirement and dreamings in the still southern regions. We visited the Pasha's palace, (bringing away some splendid jessamine from his garden) and his cotton factory; and his chained prisoners in the guard-house. All wore chains, which glittered in the sun,—for they were new and bright: and of these, seven had a collar round their necks, and their hands confined in a sort of stocks,—much more clumsy than any handcuffs. These seven were doomed to death;—desperadoes who would be hanged or shot if the Pasha did not reverse their sentence—of which there seemed to be no expectation. They were as lively as the busy passengers in the streets, and cried “baksheesh” as vigorously as any idler in the place. The other prisoners were, we were told, thieves and deserters.

Our stay at Isna for so many hours was for the sake of the crew; that they might bake their bread. This was done before evening; and we proceeded, in order to reach the temple at Arment (the Greek Hermonthis) by the morning. It was a glorious evening; and, after watching the young moon going down just after the sun, there were still some things to be seen on the

western bank. Whatever was on the ridge showed black against the orange sky;—a pacing camel; a string of asses; some children at play, and two or three men at prayers. As they faced the east, every gesture of prostration was seen, and every flow of their majestic garments.—In my childhood, I used to wonder why Pharaoh's kine came up out of the water: but now, and often besides, I saw how truly Egyptian this dream was. The cattle often cross the Nile by swimming,—sometimes resting on a shoal in the middle of the river. This evening, a noble buffalo kept us in a state of interest for half an hour by his incessant efforts to land, and the difficulty he had in doing so. Again and again, he put off, swimming slowly about with only his head above water; and then he would struggle in the tenacious mud, and seem to have obtained a footing; and slip back again, and disappear in the shadow of the bank. Then he would come out again into the light; the failing light, which was almost gone before he was safe. We saw the last shine of it on his sides as he paced slowly up to the ridge, evidently trembling and exhausted. All things in Egypt seem to cross their great highway with as little concern as we do ours. As we walk across a road, they pass through the Nile. Whole droves of cattle, and sometimes asses and sheep; and children, whenever the fancy takes them; and men, with a bundle of millet-stalks under them, or with a log to lean their breasts against;—their clothes, or their burden of produce, on their heads. We never witnessed any sign of fear of crocodiles, or heard of any disasters by them, as far as I remember.

At five in the morning, we were at the nearest point to the Arment temple; and I walked the mile and half which lay between the shore and it with great pleasure, having grass to tread on for the first time for several weeks. There was an air of civilisation about the village which was rather unusual,—the fences being neatly built of millet-stalks, tall and thick, and the place supplied with water from a well-kept pond, fed by a channel from the river. Immediately beyond the village, we entered the Desert, which was all undulating with mounds of broken pottery and other rubbish. The quantity of broken pottery about these places remained a mystery to us to the last. In a hollow among these mounds lie the ruins of the Christian Church, which was itself built, it is thought, from the materials afforded by the larger temple of Hermonthis. These ruins consist of some portions of wall, very massive from the size of the blocks; much strewn stone, and a considerable number of prostrate columns, of red granite. A little further on stand the remaining pillars of Cleopatra's temple; eight altogether, in the area and portico. The remains are miserably obstructed and deformed by the mud partition and huts which have taken shelter under the sculptured walls and painted roofs of the temple: but one is less concerned about it here than in almost any other case; for the edifice is, as I said, of no older time than Cleopatra's. The witch-queen still interests us enough to make us run after every memorial of her. The many who know her only through Shakspeare hunt for her portrait-figure at Philæ before they look for Osiris and Isis: and they come here to see the hundred representations

of her, sitting with the little Cæsarion on her knees,—(in honour of whose birth this temple was built,)—or presenting the child to the gods. Nothing can be more distinct than the features of the queen, when seen in the full light, on the outer walls; and they are no doubt to be taken as a portrait, as the edifice was her own work. The face is very charming; the features small, and not at all after the Greek type; and the expression girlish and simple,—like that of the ancient Isis and Athor. We obtain here an impression something like that which we derive from the pictures of Mary Queen of Scots: a conviction of the general resemblance, with no recognition of such extraordinary beauty as we read of, but a sense that the charm might be all that we are told when the soul was at work among those features.

We see how the little Cæsarion is committed to the guardianship, even to the nursing of the god of Hermonthis,—the Amun Ra of Thebes, here presented under the form of the bull Bash, or Basis,—which has characteristics distinguishing it at once to the eye from the bull Apis. In one place we see the bull suckling,—that is, sustaining—the child: and over the principal gate, there is a sculpture of the bull bearing Cæsarion between his horns; while a decorative margin is formed by four copies in small of the same group of Cleopatra with the child on her knees. There is a profusion of ornament throughout the building; but it is of a low style of art;—about, however, to give place to a lower; for this is, of course, the last work of the Ptolemies, who now gave place to the Romans.

CHAPTER XIV.

THEBES.—EUROPEAN TRAVELLERS AND NATIVE ARABS.
—THE PAIR.—THE RAMASÉUM.—EL-KURNEH.

At last we were at Thebes,—in the afternoon of this Tuesday, the 19th of January. We were very happy ; for there was no hurry. On either hand lay the plain of Thebes ; and before us there was leisure to explore it. We staid eight days ; giving five to the western bank, and three to the eastern. We made, we thought, good use of our time, exploring daily as much as we could without plunging ourselves into too much fatigue and excitement. What the excitement is can be known only to those who have spent successive days in penetrating the recesses of the palaces, and burying themselves in the tombs of the Pharaohs, who lived among the hundred gates of this metropolis of the world before the Hebrew infant was laid among the nests of the Nile water-fowl. Perhaps some hint of what the interest of Thebes is may be derived from such poor account as I am able to give of what we saw there : but I shall tell only what we saw, and nothing of what we felt. That can be spoken of nowhere but on the spot.

This first evening, we attempted nothing beyond a little stroll on the shore at sunset. The first thing we saw was a throng of boats ; five English flags, and one

Russian. Some were just departing: and others went the next day. Thebes is the last place in the world where one wishes for society: so I dare say every party of the whole throng was longing to see all the rest sail away. In the end, we enjoyed as much quietness as we could expect, and suffered no real interruption in our expeditions. After the exchange of sundry greetings with our neighbours, the gentlemen and I walked up to the ruins of the El-Uksur temple, and in and out, and round about, till we arrived at some understanding of their arrangement and object. We now found how much we had gained by practice in looking at temples. This was hardly like the same group of ruins we had visited a few weeks before. By the training of the eye in the intermediate time, we saw new beauty in the proportions,—and especially of the obelisk,—new spirit in the sculptures, and a higher and fresher glory in the colonnades. We were not less but more impressed by the magnitude of the scale of the architecture; and far more impressible by all its other features.

When the moon came up, it was time to be returning to our boat; but as we were turning the corner of the ruins, a man accosted us, with an air of invitation, courteously pointing out a long flight of steps, and saying apparently (but we had no interpreter with us) something about a castle. Mr. E. told me this was, no doubt, the Guard-house; and we agreed to go and see it. Instead of Governor, garrison, or chained prisoners, however, we found an elderly gentleman on his *deewán*, enjoying his *chibouque*. He addressed us in French, ordered coffee and pipes, offered now some information about the ruins, and next, his guidance among them

during our stay at Thebes. When he permitted us to depart, at the end of half-an-hour, Mr. E. said to me, "Well now; who is this that we have been seeing?" "Nay," said I, "that is what I thought you were going to tell me." He was certainly no official personage; and certainly he was an European. He proved to be the Signor Castellare whom we had heard of as having settled himself at Thebes, to discover antiquities, and explain them to those who have faith in his interpretation; and to sell specimens to such as have money enough to pay his very high prices for them. It is only by connivance that he does these things; for the Pasha's pleasure is that none of the antiquities shall leave the country. And the connivance is not likely to last long; for the people of the place naturally dislike that a stranger should take out of their hands the traffic with visitors, which they find much more profitable than their inevitable sales to the Signor. Whenever the Signor does anything to prove to the world his sound knowledge on the subject of Egyptian antiquities, every one will be glad of his offered guidance, and of his help, at any price, in securing specimens. In the meantime, perhaps the works of Champollion, Rosellini and Wilkinson, compared with the old classical writings which relate to Egypt, will be found to give guidance enough, while there is seldom any scarcity of illustrative curiosities on the spot.

At midnight, three more boats arrived; and their owners roused the echoes of the whole region, by firing guns, in honour of the English boats on the river. We found the English here generally quite as well pleased with the behaviour of the Arabs as we were. They

found their crews, and also the country people, friendly and helpful,—even affectionate, in all their intercourses. The crews were always willing and cheerful about their work, and honest in their transactions with the strangers. The drawbacks were the incessant begging of the country people; and the noise and childish quarrelling of the crews among themselves. These were troublesome incidents; but not to be complained of by us strangers as injuries. Among the many who were pleased, however, there was one who was always making grievous complaints. Never man was, by his own account, in such incessant and pressing danger of robbery, piracy, and murder, as this gentleman on the Nile. Never did any man so suffer from the perils in which he hourly saw his wife and children. Every Arab he met wanted to rob him: every group on the bank, and every party in a boat was congregated to board and pillage his dahabieh, and murder his family. He showed us a loaded six-barrelled pistol which he usually carried in his hand, as he declared to us, wherever he went; and which he was, he assured us, obliged very frequently to discharge. It did not seem to strike him as strange that all the other English, who went unarmed, and feared nothing, were content with the Arabs,—lost nothing, and met with no alarms. He remained fully convinced of his danger: and this is the reason why I mention his case here. It is the least that European travellers can do in acknowledgment of the security and facilities which the Pasha's government affords them on the Nile, to testify to that security and those facilities; and the testimony is not less due to the kindly Arabs, on whom so much of their comfort has

depended : and if one traveller talks of his dangers and wrongs as this gentleman does, it is necessary to justice that the majority should declare their contrary experience. The worst of it is that one man who has desperate adventures to tell of will make more impression than a dozen whose testimony is that they had no adventures. But this makes it all the more necessary that they should say what they found the state of things. As for myself, I walked much on shore, and was frequently wandering away by myself among the ruins or in the fields : and I had no reason to consider myself imprudent,—except indeed about the dogs. I was incessantly forgetting that Egyptian dogs are dangerous,—being trained to attack strangers. But as soon as the barking began, I found the owners quick and eager in restraining the animals : and usually there was some one of the crew within hearing, armed with a club. I do not remember that I ever met with any rude pressure or threatening but twice, while in Egypt : and then I had put myself in the power of poor creatures who could not resist the temptation of grasping at the chance of a large baksheesh. One time was at Philæ, as I have related. The other was this evening in a hut at the El-Uksur temple, where some women closed the door behind me, and proved themselves to be very sturdy beggars, till disturbed by one of my party coming to look for me. Two instances of bold begging, in ten weeks of constant opportunities, is not much.

As I took a brisk walk along the shore, to warm myself, the next morning, “the Lybian suburb” was dressed in the most wonderful colouring by the early sun. It was in that direction that our researches were

to lie for some days ; and as soon as our boat was clear of visitors after breakfast, we crossed the river, and took up our station off the western bank.—Alee was particular in his choice of animals for us to ride, that we might be suited at once for the whole time of our stay on the western side. Mrs. Y. had a horse,—quieter than my donkey. I was favoured with a strong, spirited donkey, whose curator was an active, open-faced, obliging youth, who discovered my wishes and aims with wonderful quickness, and indulged them to the utmost of his power. He presently found out my liking for visiting the Pair : and also for a canter over the plain : and almost every evening, he would point to the Colossi, and nod and smile, and begin a run in that direction, while the rest of the party went straight to the boat. And he ran so well that we generally fell in with my companions before they had dismounted, though I had made a pretty wide circuit. I can never lose the impression of these sunset rides homewards, after the excitements and toils of the day. The Pair, sitting alone amidst the expanse of verdure, with islands of ruins behind them, grew more striking to us every day. To-day, for the first time, we looked up at them from their base. The impression of sublime tranquillity which they convey when seen from distant points, is confirmed by a near approach. There they sit, keeping watch,—hands on knees, gazing straight forward, seeming, though so much of the faces is gone, to be looking over to the monumental piles on the other side of the river, which became gorgeous temples after these throne seats were placed here ;—the most immoveable thrones that have ever been established on this earth. He who

is popularly called the Memnon, is sadly shattered. This is the work that Cambyzes tried his hand upon overthrowing. With all his efforts, he shattered it only down to the waist. It is built up again; patched up;—a blank rough space only remaining where we would fain see a face. If the faces were of the tranquil, innocent character which marks the old sculptures, and would eminently suit the composure of the attitude, the impression must have been majestic indeed: inviolable to any one but Cambyzes. Strabo says that, as he was told, the damage was done by an earthquake. One would like to think that Nature, rather than Man, had done it; and perhaps the inscriptions of ancient visitors, who lay the blame on Cambyzes, need not have much weight. But how came the earthquake to leave the mass of the throne and body unhurt, while shattering the shoulders and head? I suppose nobody thinks that the whole was thrown over, and set up again, the fellow colossus remaining uninjured.—The inscriptions are wonderfully numerous; most in Latin; some in Greek.—On the pedestal,—the side of the throne-chair,—is old Nilus, once more busy, as in all times, in binding up the throne of the King with his water-plants. The King is Amunoph III. His name is over the tablet bound up by Nilus; and also on the back of the statue.

These statues sit now, as I have said, in the midst of an expanse of verdure, at the season when travellers visit them. At high Nile, they are islands in the midst of a waste of waters. But of old, their pedestals rose from the pavement of the Dromos or course which formed the avenue to the palace-temple of Amunoph, eleven hundred feet behind the colossi. This palace-

temple, once superb with its statues, columns and sphinxes, is now a mere heap of sandstone;—a little roughness in the plain, when seen from the heights behind. The sphinxes are at St. Petersburg; the columns are broken off from their bases; the statues peep out in fragments from under the soil. In the days of the glory of Thebes, the Nile did not come here; but the whole avenue, with all its erections, stood on raised ground,—a magnificent sight from the river. The Nile itself has risen since those days; and in proportion to the raising of its bed has been its spread over the plain; so that the pavement of the dromos, and the pedestals of the colossi, have been buried deeper and deeper in mud; and must continue to be so. Sand may be dealt with hereafter, for the rescue of the treasures of Egyptian art; but it does not appear that the mud of the Nile can. How strange it is to look forward to the gradual stifling of these giants,—sitting patiently there for more thousands of years, to be buried, inch by inch, out of human sight! They now stand about fifty-three feet above the soil; and seven feet below it. But the mention of the total height gives less idea of their magnitude than the measurement of the limbs. From the elbow to the fingers' ends, they measure seventeen feet nine inches: and from the knee to the plant of the foot, nineteen feet eight inches.

To-day we saw, for the first time, an old Egyptian palace; that of Ramases the Great, so many of whose monuments we had visited higher up the river. This palace of the Ramases (commonly and erroneously called the Memnonium) is also a temple. The old Pharaohs brought their dead into their palaces, and

also had apartments in the temple; so that the great buildings of this metropolis were appropriated to gods and kings jointly. It is melancholy to sit on the piled stones amidst the wreck of this wonderful edifice, where violence inconceivable to us has been used to destroy what art inconceivable to us had erected. What a rebuke to the vanity of succeeding ages is here! What have we been about, to imagine men in those early times childish or barbarous,—to suppose science and civilisation reserved for us of these later ages, when here are works in whose presence it is a task for the imagination to overtake the eyesight!

I went first to the propylon; and it seemed to me, as I clambered about its ruins, that the stones of this outwork alone would build a cathedral. I found an inclined plane and staircase within the propylon, and climbed till I could make my way no further, seeing glimpses between the fallen blocks of the sunny plain and its mountain boundary. Returning, I clambered over the ruins of the mere external face of the propylon; and when I was doubting whether I had ever before performed such a feat of climbing, I found myself, on coming out at the top, still under the portal! What a gateway it must have been! A loosened jamb which slanted over my head made me feel as one might under a falling oak. Looking through, towards the palace, I saw what at once drew my eyes away from the ranges of columns, and perspective of courts and chambers;—the remains of the largest statue that even Egypt ever produced. It is only from a distance that this mass of granite would be perceived to be a statue, so enormous is its bulk. It lies overthrown among the fragments of

its limbs; the fragments themselves being masses which it would not be easy to move. The foot looks like a block preparing for a colossal statue. I had the curiosity to measure the second toe, and found its length from the fork to be two feet seven inches. I climbed upon the pile, walking up the inclined plane of its shoulder, and picking my way on the smooth surface of its neck and the remains of its cheek. Some travellers have obtained a sure footing by setting their feet in the hieroglyphic letters on its back. The features are gone, the greater part of the face being split away for millstones by the Arabs! How such a mass could be overthrown from the base remains a mystery. Every writer seems to conclude that the Persians or Ptolemy Lathyrus effected this kind of ruin throughout Thebes: but I do not know why we may not suppose an earthquake to be the agent. At El Karnac the devastation is such as to defy the belief that human agency could have been employed. Enormous columns are there overthrown from the base in one fall,—their circular stones lying overlapping each other like a row of cheeses: and this without any traces of mines, or other channel for the application of explosives. The mountains of stones also of the great propyla at El Karnac, show plainly that they fell at once; and there are no means known to us, even now, after all our study of gunpowder, which could cause such an overthrow as that at one stroke, and without leaving any traces of the means.—But, supposing this mighty Ramases to have been prostrated by an earthquake, the question remains how he came here from Syene. Whether the working was done here or at Syene, the granite was brought from thence. Sir G. Wilkinson gives its weight as some-

where about 887 tons, $5\frac{1}{4}$ cwt.* How should we now set about quarrying and conveying such a mass some hundreds of miles?

Beyond this statue, which used to sit in the area, beside the entrance to the palace, the building looks like a wood in some petrified region outside our world. The unexpanded lotus is still, to my eye, the most beautiful kind of column: but the full-blown cup is more appropriate perhaps to the larger pillars. I like the eighteen smaller pillars of the great hall here better than the twelve larger. The lighting of this hall is beautiful. The roof in the centre was raised some feet above the lateral roofing; so that large oblong spaces were left for a sight of the blue sky; and when they admitted the slanting rays of the rising and setting sun upon this grove of pillars, and, through them, lighted up the pictured walls, the glory must have been great. Forty-eight pillars supported these roofs;—roofs which were painted starry and blue like the sky. The hall was one hundred feet long. Beyond it extend pillared chambers, in succession and in groups, till we come upon mere traces of their walls and bases of their columns; and at last, out upon the bare rock. Throughout this range of building, the ground rises and the roofs sink, and the walls close in, so that the whole edifice contracts, the door-ways lessening in proportion; and an appearance is given of a longer perspective than exists.

In the sculptures on the walls, the king pays his duty to the gods, and receives privileges from them. The Supreme is here; with the other two who complete the highest triad: and some inferior deities introduce

* Modern Egypt and Thebes, II. 145.

the king into their presence, while the god of letters, Thoth, notes the dates of the royal victories on his palm-branch. Elsewhere, the Supreme presents him with Life and Power: and in the same hall, the Supreme gives him the faulchion and sceptres, ordering him, as the inscription tells us, to smite his foreign enemies with the one, and rule Egypt with the other.* How he obeyed these orders, other pictures and legends tell us. One captive group, whom he holds by the hair, are declared to be "foreign chiefs:" and there are Asiatic and other distant enemies among the vanquished in the battle-pieces, and the names of towns inscribed among the legends, as well as represented in sculptures of storming and sieges. As for his home affairs, we find a procession of twenty-three of his sons, and a group of three daughters. The names of the sons are all inscribed. Elsewhere there is a procession of priests, bearing the figures of the Theban ancestors of the king.† There is an inscription in the great hall, on one of the architraves, describing the valuable and beautiful character of this edifice, and dedicating the sculptures to his father,—the Supreme, who says, "I grant that your edifice shall be as stable as the sky." (Alas! to look round upon it now!) Isis adds, "I grant you long life to govern Egypt."‡ —The next chamber seems, as some of the learned think, to have been the library of the palace. The ceiling bears an astronomical subject; and an inscription, declaratory of the value of the building of this apartment, alludes to the "books of Thoth,"—the god of letters. This primitive Mercury is here attended, as

* Wilkinson's *Modern Egypt and Thebes*, II. 154. † *Ibid.* II. 151.

‡ Champollion. *Lettres sur l'Egypte*.

Champollion records, by a figure with an eye on his head, and surmounted by a legend "Sense of Sight:" the goddess Saf being attended in like manner by a figure with an ear on his head, and labelled "Sense of Hearing:"—(Sôlem.) Champollion interprets these figures as indicators or guardians of the library,—“the books of Thoth.” On its walls, the priests bear shrines in procession. But before the king had leisure, and perhaps qualification for thus honouring the gods and himself, he had to gain his fame, add to his dominions, and put down his enemies. On the outer walls, accordingly, we find his adventures, in a wonderful collection of battle-sculptures. What we see are a mere remnant of what existed. The greater number lie in fragments under the mounds of fallen stones: but enough are left to teach us much. The battle-scene on the wall of the area exceeds any representation I ever saw for quantity in a given space. It is barbaric, though including tokens of no mean civilisation. There is the common barbarism of making the conqueror and his equipage gigantic in comparison with all the other figures. He stands in a fine attitude in his flying chariot, his bow in hand (which he draws behind his head) and the reins tied round his waist. Two quivers crossed are at his right hand; and the exterior one is decorated with an extended lion. The king's real lion is visible in the battle too. The conqueror drives over prostrate and bound captives; and men are falling around him in all manner of desperate attitudes.—The siege and river-scenes are very curious;—the scaling-ladder, the shields, the bridges, fosses and towers (labelled “the strong town of Watsch or Batsch,”) giving us much insight into the civilisation of the time.

The phalanx of spearmen is capital; their spear-heads being carefully distinguished from the ripple of the little blue river in which such large men are floundering! Then there is the drowned chief whom his people are trying to revive; and the city wall plainly distinguished from the rock on which it is built.—The horses are finely given; and so is the king. Here, as in others of the old sculptures, we come upon what looks like an odd stroke of humour now and then, as in the ass staggering and falling under the weight of a bag of spoil,—meant probably to be thus pointed out as gold. But the humour may be merely in our view of the coalescence of the most literal representation with a method of art which we have been accustomed to consider formal and conventional beyond all other.

The most beautiful point of view for this palace was from about a quarter of a mile to the south where, looking back upon it, its soft-tinted grove of pillars rose behind the copse of dark tamarisks and acacias which intervened. This was happily not our only view of the Ramaséum. It lay in our way from some other objects; and I became quite familiar with it before the week was out.

We visited to-day a very beautiful temple at El-Kurneh; to me the most interesting, on the whole, of any of the edifices at Thebes. It is old; being begun by the father of the great Ramases, in honour of *his* father; and completed by his son in honour of himself. I will abstain from giving any detailed account of it, and merely mention some of its peculiarities.

There were once sphinxes in the dromos, the

remains of which are still traceable. These sphinxes represented king Osirei himself, — conveying the favourite boast of great men of an early time,—their union of intellectual power and physical strength. Then comes a ruined pylon,—once the second; and another dromos which brings us to the beautiful portico; beautiful, though no two pairs of its columns are at the same distance from each other. These ten columns are composed of the stalks of water plants, bound together below the capital, where they expand, and are again gathered in by the abacus. This very ancient Egyptian order gratified me more than any later ones. In a dedication inscription within we find the following declaration of the great Ramases, to whom the Supreme, Amun Ra, here again presents the symbol of Life. “Ramases, the beloved of Amun has dedicated this work to his father Amun Ra, King of gods, having made additions for him to the temple of his father, the king, son of the Sun, Osirei.”*—The part of the temple which was dedicated by this Osirei to his father, Ramases I., was finished by the illustrious grandson of the latter, who put in the sculptures. Among these sculptures is one where his grandfather stands behind the gods, bearing the insignia of Osiris, and watching the introduction and homage of his grandson to the gods. The legend over him declares him to be “Ramases deceased, esteemed by the great God, &c. &c.” Elsewhere in the same apartment, this king and Osirei, as well as the gods, are receiving the pious offerings of the great Ramases. The faces here are astonishingly preserved; and they

* Wilkinson's Modern Egypt and Thebes, II. 140.

have a full measure of the simplicity and sweetness of the old Egyptian type of countenance. I think there can be no doubt of the elegance of this temple-palace, in comparison with those of later date.

Some barbarians, called Charles and Jane Tilt, have cut and blacked their names and the date of their visit in large on some of the sacred places of this temple. As they have thought fit to publish their own names and adventure in a mischievous manner, they have no right to object to a republication which may be useful in the way of warning to others.

I was delighted to find here many of the prevalent symbolical forms,—here, in this very ancient temple. The boat which we find everywhere had at each end the finest ram's head I had seen. I was pleased to meet with grapes among the offerings. Those which I had seen at Kaláb'sheh with leaves and tendrils, were modern. But here were bunches of undeniable grapes. I saw also the elegant lamp I mentioned before ; and the lion-shaped bier. The globe and asps were on the cornices : and the ceiling of the portal was beautiful ;—cartouches and stars, on a blue ground.

These were our studies during our first day at Thebes. These palaces, built for the busy and illustrious living, were to us like tombs ; for there was a spirit of death within and around them all. Not only the inmates had passed away ; but the deeds, the modes of life, the objects of reverence, pride and desire. But to-morrow we were to penetrate deeper into the region of the dead. We were to explore some of the wonders of the Death-valley of Thebes.

CHAPTER XV.

THEBES.—OLD EGYPTIAN VIEWS OF DEATH AND HERE-AFTER.—THE PRIESTS.—INTERMENTS.—TOMB OF OSIREI.

THE most striking thing at Thebes is perhaps the evidence on every hand of the importance to the old Egyptian mind of the state of the dead. To the philosopher there is nothing surprising in this; for he knows that it must be so to an infant race, inexperienced in the history of man, and unlearned as to the powers of the human mind, and the relative value of its aims. Everywhere the mind of man is active, unsatisfied, and aspiring; and while he knows so little of the world he lives in, and the companions beside him, and the unseen region of ideas which lies about him as infantine nations do, he is impelled to refer his activity and his desires to the future which he supposes to contain what he at present wants and cannot find. It is with puerile man as it is with the child who is never satisfied with the present, but always stretching forward into the unknown future,—not knowing the value of what is under his hand, but neglecting it in dreams of what he shall have and do in some desirable state by and by. The aspiration is instinctive, and therefore right: but as yet unenlightened and undisciplined. As

he grows up, the present becomes more to him, and the future less. In proportion as he becomes truly wise, he discovers that in the present scene and moment lies more than his best industry can understand and his best powers achieve. He brings home his faculties; and finds in the present enough to occupy them all, and to fill his life completely full of interest, activity, and advancement. It is only a child, grown or ungrown,—an ignorant and undisciplined child,—who would weep for more worlds to conquer: and he is the wisest man who knows that he has always many unexplored and ungoverned worlds on his hands which should leave him no leisure for looking forward into a future which he cannot penetrate. It is with races of men as with individuals. Not knowing yet how to employ their aspirations and desires on the unfathomable and inexhaustible universe in which they are placed; not knowing how adequate their existing human powers are, if fully exercised, to their present human work; not knowing how exact is the momentary retribution of fidelity or unfaithfulness to their powers and their work, they are perpetually referring to the future for a wider scene, for new powers, and for arbitrary reward and punishment. There is nothing blameworthy or despicable in this. On the contrary, the tendency comes in happily to lift men over their infantine age of inexperience, as the child is ennobled by the forecast of his hopes before he can be yet more ennobled by the wisdom of his self-knowledge. And every working of instinct, every direction of natural aspiration is to be revered in its proper place and at its proper time. We truly respect, accordingly, the child's

or the peasant's notion of a literal judgment day, when there will be a process of trial, with books of account opened, and a sentence passed in words, and burning inflicted in the one case, and whatever the individual most desires conferred on the other. We truly respect these notions in the child and the peasant, while we know that no enlightened and disciplined man looks forward to any such actual scene. And the enlightened and disciplined man knows that while he continually thinks less of the future, as the inestimable present of life and duty opens before his contemplation and his industry, his hold of that inestimable present will appear weak and careless to a wiser than he who will come after him. Thus must we, who look back some little way, and from some small height, upon the track of ages, regard with serious respect, the engrossing attention that infantine nations gave to death and the state of the dead; the records they have left of their puerile pride, ambition and violence proving that, at the same time, they were but little aware of the value of what they held in the present life, with all its duties, its spiritual powers and privileges. As I said before, the most striking thing at Thebes is the evidence on every hand of the importance to the old Egyptian mind of the state of the dead: and these evidences will be regarded by the philosopher with the solemn reverence which the wise cannot but feel towards every form in which Faith, the noblest of human faculties, manifests itself. The literal truth of the objects of faith, when those objects are the highest that can be conceived, is a small matter: the exercise of the faculty is every thing: and though the imagery

of the Egyptian tombs is to us only imagery, while to their inmates it was anticipated fact, we may, in our sympathy with their mood of faith, enter those tombs with an awe perhaps as strong as theirs.

When the Pharaohs built their palaces and temples, they had more aims than one to fulfil. They blazoned their own deeds upon them; but they glorified the deeds of their fathers, even more carefully than their own: and they must have had in view the sympathy and edification of other men, living and to live. But their careful choice and elaborate preparation of their tombs, with every possible resort in the adornment of them, show us that the unseen state was the most interesting subject, and that of the firmest faith to them. The Pharaohs were wont to devote the early years of their reigns to royal deeds of rule and conquest: and they did not begin to build their palaces and temples till they had achieved deeds with which to glorify them, and brought home captives to do the work of building them. But it was quite otherwise with their tombs. Every man who could afford himself a tomb began its preparation early in life. A palace or temple could be carried on to completion by a successor: but a tomb was sealed-up when the owner was laid in it. It could not therefore, under the uncertainty of life, be too soon begun; and their practice seems to show that it could not be too long elaborated. Few or none appear to be finished in every part; and some were in progress through a long course of years.

The most prominent idea presented to us in these tombs is that their makers considered them to be really and truly an abode;—literally “a long home;” or, as

they called them, "everlasting habitations;" and to be prepared and provided accordingly.—The way to the long home of the Theban Kings is very appropriate and most impressive; a succession of winding defiles between grand but most desolate rocks, the recesses of which might seem to invite the candidate for death to come and rest here in the depth of silence, till his thousands of years of suspense should be fulfilled:—to rest in silence, but not in solitude: not in the solitude of the wide desert; but in the still congregation of this deep valley.

To the old Egyptians, as to all who are heedless of the unborn human race in interest for those who have lived, the true congregation of the human race must always have been looked for beyond the grave,—so immeasurably must the dead ever outnumber existing men. Every man must have felt himself one of a very small company in comparison with that which he was to join. But the case of the kings was strong indeed. Each one of them lived solitary; and it was only when he died that he could enter among his peers. He went from the solitude of that busy, peopled plain to the sanctified society of the Valley of Death. To him, this was the great event to which, as we see, he was looking forward during the best years of his life; and he devoted his wealth, his thoughts, and the most sacred desires of his heart to preparation for his promotion to the society of kings, and the presence of the gods. There, an abode would be prepared for him. On the walls of his tomb he attempted to paint the succession of mansions in the great heavenly house which he was to inhabit at last: but meanwhile, he was to dwell, for

a vast length of time, in the long home in the valley, where his peers were lying still (whether asleep or vigilant) all round about him.

How fit and impressive is the choice of this site for the metropolis of the dead can be conceived of only by contrasting it with that of the metropolis of the living. Both might be viewed at once from the mountain ridges behind western Thebes. There is a ridge where strangers are taken now, to overlook the plain; and glorious is the view: but to-day I went much higher still, to a peak whence I could see quite down into the Valley of the Tombs, and over every recess of the vivid green plain,—every nook which lay between the Arabian and Lybian hills. I chose to see it as it once was. I made myself three thousand years old, and saw from my perch what was worth looking at. Great as are the existing marvels of Thebes, they are, from this height, mere indications of the presence of man. Sprinkled over the expanse of verdure, one notices a few heaps of stones,—the temples and palaces; and a pair of sentinels,—the Colossi: and across the blue and brimming river, a little cobweb railing, which is El-Uksur; and a group of massive towers,—which is El-Karnac. This, with all its soft freshness of colouring, all its African brightness, is too sad and dreary to dwell on. It is better to see it with the eyes of three thousand years ago.

There lies the city below, filling up all the plain, except where there is a girdle of fields. It is those gardens and groves among the houses which make it cover so large a space; for there never was, in this world, such a collection of houses as would cover this

plain. How the gardens spread, not only round the palaces, but behind the ranges of dwellings which we should call streets! How their ponds gleam on the eye, and their clusters of palms overshadow their lawns, and intervene between the eye and the flat house-roofs! I can distinguish the children pushing out from among the reeds in this nearer garden, in their little papyrus boat of nautilus shape.—How finely the city ramifies,—with no circuit wall, but temple ranges running out in all directions! That advanced post of temples at intervals is a sufficient defence, if any foe should dare to come. They are perfect fortifications; and the watchmen on the summits of the propyla command the valley in both directions, as far as the irregular hill boundary admits. What masses these are,—these four which command the plain! El-Karnac and El-Uksur over yonder, and the Ramaséum and Medeenet Haboo below me! How they stand, as if each calling to the other! How each stretches out its dromos, and plants its files of sphinxes, or its pair of colossal sentinels, as if to proclaim “here lives a king, or the glory of a king!” Far over yonder, in the avenue between El-Karnac and El-Uksur, I see some movement;—surely it is the floating of pennons, and the carrying of standards. If it crosses the river, I may see what it means. Meantime, how gay is the blue winding Nile, with its heavy, slow-moving boats,—the gay chequered sails up, and the row of long oars glancing in the sun! How pretty are those villas scattered about the edge of the desert, each with its plot of garden or field sloping down into the fertile region of the plain; each with its canopy of shady palms; and every palm swaying

in the same light breeze which fills the sails on the river, and floats the pennons of that multitude in the avenues of El-Karnac! Here is a multitude below me too. The women are exchanging their goods in the areas of the streets,—bargaining slowly, it seems, because, having no coin, they have to settle the worth of their valuables before they can agree on that of their produce. And those men,—how they are toiling about that sledge,—advancing it by hair's-breadths under its load of granite; a mass as large as any merchant's house in the city! What a team of harnessed men, straining at the load! By their light complexions, they are Asiatic captives. They are helping to build yonder palace, on whose walls their captivity is to be commemorated.—The wind strengthens, and brings up some sounds which tell what a multitude is stirring below. Through the hum and buzz there comes the shock of the mallet falling on the wedge in the quarry, and the lowing of the cattle on the farm at the edge of the plain below. And was not that a breath of music? Yes: the blast of a distant trumpet, and some shrill pipe tones. Ah! it is from that concourse over the water. How the multitude comes sweeping down to the river's brink! Surely that crowd of boats is going to bring them over. Yes; there is the funereal boat for the transport of the dead; and those others are making a bridge for the passage of the living. What a train they will be, winding through the defiles of that death region on my left hand! How still it is at this moment! Nothing there but the shadows thrown into the hollows! No sound but of the flapping of

the wings of yonder eagle ; for the wild dog is quiet till night. What a contrast is that parched, silent, desolate valley to this gay and stirring plain ; and how complete, to those on either side, is the barrier of these rocky hills which I, from my perch, can overlook ! To-day, as yonder funeral train winds through it, the echoes of the valley of death will be awakened, and they will answer to notes of wailing, or shouts of boasting ; and its hot mounds will be alive with shadows : but to-morrow, the two regions which are separated but by a partition of rock, will be once more opposed as activity to oblivion, and Life to Death.

As it appeared to me from that pinnacle, it appeared daily when I rode through the Defiles of the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings. I felt that there was never a nobler seat for a metropolis of the living than the plain of Thebes, and never a nobler approach than by these ravines from the city of the living to the kingdom of the dead.

Every Egyptian king was, as I have said, a priest. He might be chosen out of the Second Caste,—the Military : but he must become a priest before he could assume the sovereignty. It was a sufficient reason for this that the king must always thus be an instructed person, and in fellowship with the high class who held all the dignities and privileges of knowledge and sacred office : but there was another reason. The sovereign in Egypt was assisted in his government by a council of priests : and of course it was necessary for him to hold, in common with his advisers, that knowledge and those secrets of Custom by which the nation was governed. Before looking at their most interesting

existing work, it may be well to form in our minds some slight picture of this remarkable order of men.

Herodotus gives us information of their personal habits, which were carefully arranged with a view to their perfection as models before the eyes of the people. We all know how much more necessary, and how much more difficult extreme cleanliness is in Egypt than elsewhere. The priests shaved their heads; and their whole bodies were shaved every three days, that, as Herodotus says, there might not, by possibility, be any vermin or soil on those who served the gods.* Twice by day, and twice by night, they washed in cold water: and they wore no other clothing than a dress of linen, and shoes of papyrus. They were daily served with the sacred meats of the temples, ready cooked; but from some articles of food, as fish, they abstained; and were compelled to be very moderate in the use of wine. The food they abstained from seems to have been such as tended to produce leprous and other eruptive diseases. They had an extreme and mysterious horror of beans; never permitting them to be sown in Egypt, or touched when found growing wild. Whatever were their reasons were probably those of Pythagoras in warning his disciples against touching beans. Some have supposed (after a hint in Aristotle) that Pythagoras meant to warn his pupils against political action,—the ballot vote being given by a bean: but as the philosopher derived so much else from Egypt, and as we know the strength of the reprobation of beans there, we need only suppose him to have been

* Herod. II. 37.

more aware of the priestly reasons for that reprobation than we are.

It need scarcely be pointed out that much more was included in the class of sacred things among ancient nations (as among modern half-civilised ones) than with us. Legislation, Geometry, Medicine, every science was a sacred study among the Egyptians, and engrossed by the priests; as was the whole of their religious philosophy. They made laws which they enforced without rendering any reason, holding that the people had "nothing to do with the laws but to obey them." They explored many regions of natural science, giving the people the results in the form of divination and magic. They held among themselves the doctrines of the unity of God, and of a divine moral government, and lowered their doctrine to meet the comprehension of the people, by deifying the attributes of God, and making local rulers of them. The testimony of ages has proved the vice of this method of proceeding: but we must remember that the Egyptian priesthood had not this testimony of ages. We must remember how they stood, a little band of observers, among the wonders and mysteries of the universe; and that, as yet, they had to collect the facts of external nature to a great extent before they could look far into causes (so-called); and that these facts were not regarded by them with the calm eye of knowledge, but the bashful glance of new and awe-struck perception. They could hardly receive such knowledge as they had otherwise than as a special gift and revelation to themselves, as students of the universe. It was not known then, not dreamed of by any one,

that knowledge is the equal birthright of all, and that truth is of the last importance to every human being. We are not therefore to reprobate in the Egyptian priesthood what is worthy of reprobation now in any man or body of men;—a distrust of the general understanding, as compared with our own; a keeping back of the knowledge which is the birthright of all; an offer, under veils and disguises, of that truth which every man has an equal right to see in its native purity and nobleness. The Egyptian priesthood tried the experiment of a civil government which was probably the fittest at the time for its purposes—those purposes being, we may hope, centred in the good of the people :—Pythagoras, at least, thus understood the matter. The experiment, which lay within the terms of natural laws, appears to have succeeded; the Egyptian mode of governing society by a council of the wisest and best having lasted longer than perhaps any other government that nations have experienced. The Egyptian priesthood tried another experiment, which failed, because it violated the terms of natural laws. They tried the experiment of making themselves gods to the people in regard to the administration of knowledge and natural benefits. They took upon themselves to measure and to manage the minds of men in regard to matters which in fact they held only in common with all men. They did this, I doubt not, in all sincerity, fidelity, and benevolence; but it was a mistake of ignorance; and it was followed by its natural retribution. Ignorance, whether guilty or unavoidable, is always presumptuous. These priests were ignorant and presumptuous, while most earnestly intent on doing good

with such knowledge as they had. They assumed the exclusive possession of that to which all had a right ; and they corrupted themselves and their charge together. The philosophy they held languished and nearly died out. Their own order deteriorated in power, knowledge, and character ; and the people became idolaters, sinking into that weakness and under that doom which superstition brings on as surely as the pollution of the atmosphere causes lassitude and lingering death. The experiment of spiritual government failed ; but we are not to deal with the priests for it as if they had had our thousands of years of added experience.

I never believed during my school days, and I am sure I never shall now, that any order of men ever carried on a wilful and deliberate fraud, from generation to generation, for any purpose whatever. I used to suspect in my school days, as I believe now, that all the heathen priesthoods which were held up for my scorn as bands of impostors, had faith, one way or another, in what they taught. And there seems every reason to believe this now of the Egyptian priesthood, who taught more extraordinary things perhaps than any other. If we do but put ourselves in their places for an instant, we may perhaps see how many things may have been venerable and true to them, which we, with our knowledge and our ignorance, our experience and our prejudices, do not know how to treat seriously at all.

To them, nothing was so wonderful, so mysterious, so important as Life and Organisation. Their purity of life and habits,—their taking but one wife, and banishing all indecency from their temple rites,—enlightens us as to much that we might reprobate otherwise in the

illustrations of some of their festivals, and a few of their doctrines. Perhaps they were wiser than we are in their reverence for natural instincts ; and they were certainly not wrong in thinking life and its production the most sacred and the most real, and therefore the most important fact with which the human race can have concern. When they by degrees led the people down into gross brute-worship (if indeed it is true that they did so) they certainly misapplied or ill-conveyed their reverent appreciation of the great fact of life ; but the fault was in the misapplication, and not in the philosophy which recognised in life, wherever found, something altogether sacred, before which the human intellect must bow down, as an insoluble mystery. I am sure that we are wrong in the other extreme, in the levity or utter thoughtlessness with which we regard the races of inferior animals, which have shared with ours, for thousands of years, the yet unsolved mystery of sentient existence, without sharing with us any thing else than what is necessary for the support of that existence. We know no more of the experience, one may say, the mind, of the cattle, the swallows, the butterflies, and worms about us than if they lived in another planet. They and man have met hourly for all these thousands of years without having found any means of communication ; without having done anything to bridge over the gulf which so separates them that they appear mere phantoms to each other. The old Egyptian priests recognised the difficulty, and made a mistake upon it ;—disastrous enough. We, for the most part, commit the other great mistake of not recognising the mystery. We are not likely ever to embody our consciousness of it in

any form of brute worship ; but we are hardly qualified to criticise those who fell into that perhaps sublime error in the early days of human speculation.

Then again ; about their Oracles, Magic, and Medicine ;—it is needless and therefore unjust, to attribute to them any artifice or insincerity. All who have duly inquired into that class of natural facts know that among human faculties exist those of perception or apprehension of distant and of future events ; and some powers of sympathetic operation, whose nature and limits are as yet but little understood. Those powers are as yet but too little inquired into, notwithstanding the example and exhortations of Bacon, Cuvier, Laplace, and other philosophers who were rendered by their philosophy meek enough to learn from nature. Finding, as we do, indisputable proofs that at present the human being is capable of various states of consciousness, and of knowing events which are happening afar, and of fore-knowing events which are future,—sometimes spontaneously, and sometimes by means of an agency purposely employed ;—knowing, on the other hand, that history abounds with records which everybody believes more or less, of prophecy, of preternatural (so-called) knowledge, of witchcraft, unaccountable sympathies, and miraculous cures ; we have every reason to suppose that the Egyptian priesthood encountered and held the facts which some of us encounter and hold, and employed them as sincerely and devoutly as they employed other facts in natural philosophy. It is probable that the oracles were true : and we have no right to doubt that the priests believed them true,—as earnestly as they believed that they could cure the sick whom they carried

into their temples, and on whose heads they religiously laid their hands, with invocations to the gods. The faculties which drew the attention of Bacon and others are found more vigorous, more spontaneous, and more easily excitable among orientals than among ourselves. If we find, by the half-dozen, merely by opening our minds to the fact, cases of far-seeing, and fore-seeing, and curative power, it is probable that such cases were familiar to the heathen priesthoods of old; and that they sincerely believed that persons so gifted held a revealing commission from the gods. While fully aware of the means necessary for eliciting the faculty, and using those means, the priest might wait on the speech of the oracular somnambule, believing it to proceed from the veritable inspiration of the god. This is not the place for bringing together the evidence that exists about the dealings of the Egyptian priests with the sick and infirm: but it is curious; and it shows no cause for the assumption that they were jugglers, or in any way insincere in their practice. They probably believed that they should give relief by the "touching with the hands" which, as Solon tells us, "will immediately restore to health" when soothing medicines are of no avail; and by that "stroking with gentle hands" which Æschylus says was to be had on the Nile:* and they were probably justified in their belief by the results. Nothing but a very large proportion of cures will account for the continued celebrity of any seat of health during a sequence of many centuries.

* Prometheus to Io: "There Zeus will render you sane, stroking you with gentle hand and simply touching you." This sanctuary at Canopus was celebrated for the cures wrought by the god,

As to the oracles, there were many in Egypt; and they were famous from the earliest times of which we have any record. The two most celebrated were those of Amun Ra, in the Oasis of Amun; and that of Buto in the city of that name.* Herodotus tells a curious story of the establishment of the Oracles of Amun Ra and of Dodona.† He heard two versions;—one from the priests of Amun at Thebes; the other from the priestesses of the oracle at Dodona. The Greek priestesses told him that two black doves were carried off from Thebes; one of which went into the Lybian Desert, and the other came to Dodona, perched on an oak, and spoke, saying that it was the will of the king of the gods that he should have an oracle there. The dove which flew to the Lybian oasis delivered a similar command there from Amun Ra. The story of the Theban priests to Herodotus was that two women, sacred to the god, were carried off from Thebes by the Phœnicians, and set up oracles at the Oasis and at Dodona. They were probably carried off for the sake of that power of prevision which had caused their consecration at Thebes, and which they exercised afterwards at the two new oracular seats. Herodotus says expressly that there were no priestesses in Egypt:‡ yet it is certain that women of the priestly caste were, in one way or another, employed and consecrated about the temples; and in all purity and honour. They were probably the utterers of the oracle; and might be also the dispensers of health in the sanctuaries. Among so large a body as that of the Egyptian priesthood, it is probable that there was never any want of somnambules,

* Herod. II. 83.

† Herod. II. 54, 55.

‡ Herod. II. 35.

who would be looked upon as chosen by the god of the region to deliver his oracles; and who would do it, while the faculty worked clearly (which we now find to be rarely for any long time;) and without any need of jugglery at the time, or occasion to suspect it now. Diodorus Siculus tells us of a daughter of Sesostris who seems to have had the faculty as eminently as Joan of Arc, exercising it with regard to her father's victories as Joan did about her own. Her father, being king, was also High-priest, and must have known how far to trust his daughter's divination: and he planned his proceedings, and prepared for his conquests, under her direction.* Herodotus observes that this Theban oracle and that of Dodona are much like each other:† that the art of foretelling future events, as practised in the Greek temples, was derived from Egypt: and that it is certain that the Egyptians were the first of the human race who established feasts and public assemblies, processions, and the manner of approaching God and holding intercourse with him: and that the Greeks had borrowed these customs from the Egyptians.

Every god had, as Herodotus tells us, a high-priest and several other priests; each of whom is succeeded on his death by his son.‡ The principle of their sacrifices was to offer to the gods what was hostile or unacceptable to them; so that the sacrifice, while a sign of homage, was so through an act of vindictiveness. The animals offered were usually those in which a wicked soul was, or might be supposed to be, residing at the time. They laid hands on the head of the

* Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians, I. 261.

† Herod. II. 58.

‡ Herod. II. 37.

victim, charged it with maledictions,* and then got rid of it as fast as possible. If there were Greeks at market, the head was sold to them: if not, it was thrown into the river. The bull Apis was, as everybody knows, black, with white marks; the star on the forehead being the sign of its being an incarnation of the deity.† The bullocks offered in sacrifice were red, because Typho was supposed to be of that complexion: and if the priests found a single hair on the animal which was not red, they rejected it.‡

One of the sacred traditions of Egypt was that Isis had given one-third of the land to the priests, on condition of perpetual honours being paid to Osiris after his death. We know how Joseph left the priests' lands in their possession when he bought up all the rest of the land of Egypt: and when, after the famine, he decreed that the king should have a fifth part of the produce, he excepted the lands of the priests from the impost.§ The personal wants of the priests were all supplied from the temples: and thus they were entirely free from the cares of life. For one item of property they had the Tombs: and their monopoly of a property in such constant request must have been very profitable.

It appears that there was a lake made near every capital city in Egypt,|| for the transit of the dead; and a sacred boat, to bear the hearse; and a boatman whose

* Herod. II. 39.

† Herodotus says (III. 28,) "The Egyptians say that a flash of lightning descends from heaven upon her" (the cow-mother of Apis) "and that from this ray she conceives the god Apis."

‡ Herod. II. 38.

Genesis, XLVII. 22, 26.

|| Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians, V. 420.

official name, written in Greek, was Charon.* The funeral train were obliged to pass over this lake on the way to the tomb; but they might return by land. The purpose of the obligatory custom of crossing the lake was that all the dead might pass through the same ordeal before admission to their "eternal habitation," as the priests called the tomb. This ordeal was judgment by the forty-two † assessors who, on earth, performed the first stage of the work which was to be completed by the forty-two heavenly assessors, who awaited the dead within the threshold of the unseen world. Notice was given to these judges of the day of the funeral; and they stood in a half circle on the nearer shore of the lake, awaiting the arrival of the funeral train. Any person might accuse the deceased in their presence of any immoral act. If the accusation was proved, the deceased was not allowed to pass. If the accuser could not substantiate his story, he was severely punished. Even kings ‡ have been known to be turned back from the place of embarkation, when acts of injustice have been proved against them: and it appears that priests had no more exemption than others from this ordeal. Those of the rejected dead who had left a family behind them were carried home, and their mummy-cases set upright against the wall of some chamber; a perpetual spectacle of shame and grief to their families, who suffered acutely from the disgrace of what had happened. Those who were poor and friendless, as well as vicious, were put into the ground where the rejection took place; and this was the shore where

* Diodorus, I. 92.

† According to Champollion.

‡ Diodorus, I. 72.

their melancholy ghosts wandered, if poets say true, pining for the Elysian fields which lay beyond; those Elysian fields* being the beautiful meadows which, in the principal burial-place of the Nile valley, at Memphis, extended beyond the lake of the Dead, all flowery with lotus and blossoming reeds.

Besides persons convicted of criminal acts, debtors were excluded from burial.† A creditor might possess himself of the mummy till the family had satisfied his claims; and the priests could refuse a tomb till it could be paid for. It became the ambition of the family of a debtor to furnish forth, sooner or later, a grand funeral, which, as the liabilities of the deceased must be first discharged, was in fact a restoration of the family honour.—In some cases of strong conjugal affection, the survivor retained at home the body of the departed, that both might be carried to the tomb together: but in such cases, it was always understood that a respectable funeral was in reserve.

The priests kept a number of tombs always ready,—probably covered with the ordinary kinds of paintings, and finished, except in the blank spaces left for the name and titles and character of the occupant. It is

* Diodorus, I. 96.

† According to Herodotus (II. 136) this was a very old arrangement, dating from a law of Asychis, who, early in the First Period, built the Brick Pyramid. "Under his reign, as commerce suffered from a scarcity of money, he published, the priests say, a law which forbade borrowing except on condition of the body of the borrower's father being given in pledge. It was added to this law that the creditor should also have in his power the burial of the debtor; and that if he refused to pay the debt for which he had deposited a pledge so precious, he could not, after his death, be laid in the tomb of his fathers, nor in any other; and that he could not, after the death of any of his own family, render them this honour."

certain that services for the dead and offerings to them were celebrated at times long after the funeral; and it is thought probable that in cases where a new name is put over the old one, and a different family has clearly come into possession of the place, there may have been a discontinuance of the payments and offerings given for services for the deceased, and the priests have let the tomb for a second-hand place of burial.* Kings and wealthy families no doubt purchased the site, or the excavated chambers, and adorned them according to their own taste; often beginning the work in early manhood, as I have mentioned before, and carrying it on till the day of death.

When I speak of the services and offerings to the dead, it does not follow that these were presented within the tomb. The tomb appears to have been closed and sealed at once. But small altars, sculptured with offerings, have, in so many instances, been found before the entrances of tombs,† that we may suppose the rites to have been celebrated there.

After permission to pass on had been given by the judges, an eulogy on the deceased, and a prayer to the gods for his welfare in Hades, were read by one of the officiating priests; and Charon proceeded in his ferrying. When the opposite shore was reached, and the procession landed, the ground was sprinkled before the wheels of the funeral car; and sometimes palm-branches were strewn in the way.‡ The body was sometimes crowned with amaranth or other everlastings, or with bay-leaves, or fresh flowers.§

* Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians, V. 384.

† Ibid. V. 421.

‡ Ibid. V. 387.

§ Ibid. V. 423.

There was much display of sorrow. In the paintings of funereal rites, we always see mourners throwing dust on their heads, beating themselves, and evidently uttering cries.—In ordinary cases, the body was laid in one of the pits or recesses in the tomb: but in the case of kings and great men, we know that there was a sarcophagus in a chamber appropriated to it.

Thus much before the sealing up of the tomb. What afterwards?

As he had passed the external judgment, he was believed by the mourners without to be assured of re-union, in his immortal essence, with the Supreme, from whom all being emanates. The family have likened him, in the preparation of his body, to Osiris, and have painted the emblems of Osiris on his envelope; and will henceforth call him by that sacred name. The offerings they bring, and will continue to bring occasionally, are not consecrated to their mortal comrade, but to the portion of divinity which dwelt in him.—They place behind their altar of offerings the images of Isis and Nephtys, the First and the Last: and believe that the First and the Last attend at the head and feet of the body, as long as it remains in the tomb.* They think of him as finding his way in the untried regions which they yet seem to themselves to know so familiarly. He leaves behind him the eulogy which is inscribed on the entrance wall of his tomb, and is met by Thoth, the Conductor of the dead, by whom he is fetched away, and led on to a more fearful judgment than that man's judgment by the shore of the lake which he has passed with honour. He is announced, according to his legend,

* Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians, V. 416.

thus : "Arrival of a soul in Amenti." His secret faults, and his sins of omission, of which men could be no judges, are now to come under review : and Thoth, whose legend * declares him "the Secretary of Justice of the other great gods," is to produce his book, in which he has recorded the whole moral life of the soul come to judgment.—The forty-two heavenly assessors are believed to represent the forty-two sins which the Egyptians believed man to be subject to. Each searched the newly-arrived soul, and declared its condition in respect to the particular sin.† Then came the trial of the balance. The symbol of the actions of the candidate are placed in one scale, and the symbol of integrity in the other. Thoth looks on, ready to record. Horus holds the hand of the candidate; and the dog ‡ watches the process, ready to turn on the condemned if his scale should be "found wanting." If all is well, he advances in front of the balance, and finds the infant Horus seated on his lotus-blossom before the throne; and on the throne is the Judge, prepared to welcome him by raising the end of his sceptre, and to permit him to enter among the gods within. Of the happy state little was revealed, because, as it was declared, "the heart of man could not conceive of it." Almost the only particular declared was that there was a tree of Life, § on

* Champollion. *Lettres sur l'Egypte*.

† Mischief. Blasphemy. Idleness. Stealing divine goods. Lying. Libertinism. Impurity. Scepticism ("head-shaking at the words of truth.") Long-speechifying. Need for remorse. Gluttony.—Here are some of the forty-two sins read off by Champollion from the Legends. *Lettres sur l'Egypte*.

‡ If any one wishes to know the name of the Egyptian Cerberus, I can indulge him with it,—citing Champollion. The name is Teûôm-enement.

§ The Persea.

whose fruit the gods wrote the names of mortals destined to immortality, and whose fruit made those who ate of it to be as gods. His relatives thought of him as wearing on his head, as a mark of his justification, the feather of integrity: and they wrote beside his name, from that time forward, the name of the goddess of Justice; a practice equivalent to that of affixing the epithet "justified" to his name. This goddess of Justice, Thmei, is present during the trial of the soul: and she is identified in the sculptures by her legend "Thmei, who lives in Amenti, where she weighs hearts in the balance;—no sinner escapes her." *

The survivors of any one for whom a burial has been obtained, but who might be suspected of unfitness for the heavenly mansions, were enabled to form but too clear an idea of his fate; for the pains of the wicked could be conceived of by human imagination, though the immortal pleasures of the just could not. The purgatory of the Egyptians was in fact described definitely enough: and the representations of it in the tombs give a strange sensation to the gazer before he has become accustomed to them. At the extreme end of a large tomb at Thebes,† I saw some marks on the black and stained wall which made me hold my candle nearer, and persevere till I had made out the whole sculpture, which gave me at last the impression of a bad dream. A hopeless-looking pig, with a bristling back, was in a boat, the stern of which was towards the heavenly regions. Two monkeys were with it, one at the bow, and the other whipping or driving the pig.

* Champollion. *Lettres sur l'Egypte*.

† Bruce's, or the Harper's.

This was a wicked soul, sent back to earth under the conduct of the agents of Thoth. The busy and gleeful look of the monkeys, and the humbled aspect of the pig were powerfully given. This was the lowest state of the punished soul ; but it would have to pass through some very mournful ones, and for a very long time,—to be probably a wolf, a scorpion, or a kite, or some other odious creature, in weary succession,—for a term of from three thousand to ten thousand years. This was called passing through its “orbit of necessity.”

We now know enough of the outward state, and of the views and expectations of a Pharaoh, to understand the illustrations of his tomb. He was a priest, and therefore informed of the secret speculations of the wise upon the nature of the Divine Government and the destiny of man. On account of both his civil and his ecclesiastical rank, he was compelled to blazon forth his deeds and his expectations in great pomp. He has been laid in the chambers of the tomb with every funereal observance ; and he has left on those walls illustrations of his faith which the vulgar may take literally, or let alone as unintelligible, while to priestly eyes they once told more than we shall now ever understand ; and through those of a Pythagoras spread a philosophy through the world, so lofty as to command the praise at once of heathen, Jew and Christian. Here, where the common eye, then as now, could see only a household of gods and nothing higher, Pythagoras could see, through these transparent shows of attributes, that there was, because there must be, some vital centre, from whence they derived their

existence. While the vulgar saw only in the fate of the damned "the circle of necessity," he saw it everywhere, believing that the agency of the central unity was operative wholly through numbers,—which are another name for certainty. Where others saw painted the array of the Hours, he perceived between each two the chain of Cause and Effect. Where others saw altar flames, he recognised the aspirations of the intellect. Where others shrank from pictures of torture and dismemberment, he calmly studied the conflicts of the intellect and soul. Where others saw a range of mummy closets with folding doors, he gained ideas of that succession of spheres through which the aspiring spirit has to pass, before attaining the vital centre from which it came forth, and to which it may, when worthy, return. Where the vulgar saw—what the priests told them to see—"an eternal abode," to which the dead king had come from "the inn" of his own palace,*—he knew that here the dust would, sooner or later, return to dust, while the spirit had returned to Him who had given it forth. Josephus says that Pythagoras was the most eminent of the heathens for wisdom and piety; and believes that he would have spoken more wisely still on the highest matters, if he had been safe from the malice of the ignorant.—The testimony of Herodotus is this:† "These people," the Egyptians, "are the first who have advanced the doctrine that the soul of man is immortal: that, when the body is dead, the soul enters always into that of some animal; and that having thus passed successively into all kinds of terrestrial, aquatic and aerial creatures, it

* Diodorus, I. 51.

† Herod. II. 123.

returns into a human body, during its act of birth: and that these different transmigrations take place in the space of three thousand years. I know that some Greeks have adopted this opinion,—some sooner, and some later; and that they have made use of it as they thought proper. Their names are not unknown to me; but I preserve silence upon them.”

If this old traveller, at once so reserved and so garrulous, had spoken out here, the first name doubtless, which he would have uttered, would have been Pythagoras.

Among the many tombs open to us, we may choose one for a regular, however brief, examination. And the most attractive, without question, to any reader whose interest in the subject has carried him through this chapter, will be that discovered by Belzoni, about a quarter of a century ago, whose occupant was Osirei, father of Ramases the Great.

The neighbouring peasants observed, about the beginning of the present century, a sinking of the soil in one of the hill sides in the Valley of the Tombs. They pointed this out to successive travellers; and Belzoni happily looked into the matter. He found a tomb extending 320 feet into the hill; and how much more, there is no saying, as the earth had fallen, and barred further progress. Its depth is great, as it descends the whole way, sometimes by inclined planes, and sometimes by staircases.

The first thing we had to do was to plunge down a flight of ruined steps, to a perpendicular depth of 24 feet. This entrance was closed up by masonry when Belzoni was brought to the spot. This staircase

landed us in a passage where the walls were covered with inscriptions about Osireï ; probably a copy of the eulogy and prayers read at his funeral ; as such a record was often inscribed near the entrance of a tomb.—Next comes another staircase, on the walls of which are painted figures of genii which cannot be the Assessors, because they are not forty-two ; but thirty-seven on the one wall, and thirty-nine on the other. They are very grotesque ; and one longs to know what they mean. It is strange, and exceedingly agreeable, to feel that this longing has more hope in it as the centuries pass. It appeared, a while ago, to all eyes as it appears now to many, that Time buries the sources of our knowledge as he goes, choking them up with his inexhaustible sands, and making a dreary desert of the past. But what do we see next ? Here comes Speculation, on her tentative march, her divining rod in hand, indicating to her follower, laborious Science, where and how to work ; and lo ! out oozes the stream again,—scanty and thick enough at first, but sure to run fuller and clearer every day. See how improved our prospects of Egyptian knowledge are since the days when our Cœur de Lion was besieging Acre ! At that time, about 1190, the learned physician of Bagdad, Abdallatif, was lecturing at Cairo. In the excellent account of the Egypt of his day which he has left us, he says, speaking of the Pyramids and other monuments which were before his eyes, “these blocks are completely covered with writing in that ancient character, the import of which is wholly unknown at this day. I have not met with any person, in all Egypt, who could say that he knew, even by hearsay,

of any one who understood this character.”—“Near these Pyramids, the remains of gigantic old edifices, and a great number of solidly constructed tombs are to be seen; and it is rare to meet with any portion of these ruins which is not covered with inscriptions in that ancient character which is wholly unknown at this day.”* How delightful it must be to any Champollion, Rosellini, Wilkinson or Lepsius of our century to read this passage! And how encouraging it is to some of us who, by *their* labours, have looked with some degree of intelligence upon the monumental records of Egypt, to think that a future generation will probably see much more than we do;—perhaps understanding the genii, and the other mysteries of this tomb, nearly as well as if they had Pythagoras, or some more plain-spoken old priest, for a guide.

No part of the illustrations of this tomb is more mysterious than those of the second passage. Kneph, “the Spirit of the Supreme, which moves upon the face of the waters,”† has naturally a boat for one of his emblems: the serpent is another. Phthah, his colleague in the work of creation, is the patron of the occupant of this tomb; and their symbols abound. In this second passage we find the boats of Kneph: and a curious series of descending planes, each with a door upon it, which is supposed to figure the descent to Hades;—the Amenti, or western region of the dead. We meet the serpent here in the shape of the bier, which elsewhere is almost invariably lion-shaped. Here, the serpent has lion’s paws, instead of human

* Relation de L’Egypte, par Abdallatif, Livre I., Ch. IV.

† Wilkinson’s Ancient Egyptians, IV. 236.

feet, as usual. The "justifying" goddess stands at the lower end of the descent.

We next come to a small chamber which almost any one but Belzoni would have taken to be the extremity of the excavation. Its walls were all painted, and it had every appearance of completeness: and a deep pit in face of the entrance passage would have been concluded to be the place of burial. This pit, however, was a well: and it was dug there to draw off the waters which would otherwise injure, and which since have injured, the interior chambers. Belzoni filled up this pit; not knowing its purpose. He spied a hole in the wall, and, striking it, found it sounded hollow. He and his companions brought a palm trunk to bear on it, and battered it down; finding immediately that the best part of this wonderful tunnel was before them.

In the chamber to which the pit belongs, the King Osirei is seen making offerings to Osiris, and to some less conspicuous deities. It is in this chamber that an immeasurable serpent of considerable thickness, winds round the walls in a curious and rather elegant involution: and I think it is in the next that a serpent bier extends continuously round nearly half the walls, bearing a series of prostrate mummies. In another place, instead of mummies, the serpent supports human heads,—the headless bodies in some cases remaining near, and in other cases, being absent. The strangest use I saw made of the serpent in any old monument was here, where it was double-headed, and wore the crowns of the two Egypts,—Upper and Lower,—and had two pairs of human legs, walking opposite ways,—a dove being perched in the bend of its body. Some-

times the serpent is winged; and two, uniting their necks to support a disk, wonderfully resembled a caduceus.—In one instance, where an enormous serpent is carried by the gods, Champollion says it is the great Apophis, enemy of the sun, who is overcome and carried away captive: a suggestion which the Greeks were not slow to adopt. And it is impossible to look upon these representations of the serpent; of the tree of life, of which those who ate were made as gods; of the moving spirit of the Creator, and of the universally prevalent ideas of the original spread of water; the separation of the land from the water; the springing of vegetation, and the sudden appearance of animals on the new surface; and the separation of the upper air into regions of abode, without seeing whence was derived the first of the two accounts of the creation given in the Book of Genesis; *—that in which, not Jehovah, but the Elohim were engaged, who would be understood by the Egyptian instructors of Moses to be Kneph and Phthah;—the Presiding Spirit, and the Forming Intellect of the Supreme. The other, and very different, account † has little that is Egyptian in its character, and was probably not learned at Heliopolis or Thebes.

In the hall through the first chamber is the curious group of four kinds of people (four of each) which has excited so much speculation, but which Champollion believed that he understood plainly enough. Ra, the Sun, stands behind the sixteen figures, who are not captives, but dwellers under the sun,—inhabitants of the earth. The general legend declares them to be “the inhabitants of Egypt, and those of foreign

* Genesis, I. ; II. 1, 2, 3.

† Genesis, II. 4—25.

countries." Four are red, the Egyptian conventional complexion; and their special legend is "the race of men;" which savours of the conceit of primitive patriotism. The next four have primrose-coloured skins, and are called "Namou,"—"Asiatics.") The third set are altogether negro, in complexion and feature; and they are called "Nahasi,"—"Africans.") The fourth group are pale yellow again, and blue-eyed, and dressed in barbaric fashion, with feathers in their hair, but with long flowing robes. These are inscribed "Tamhou," which Champollion believed to designate a northern people, and probably Europeans.*—The rest of this hall is chiefly occupied by the reception of the departed king by the gods.

Next we come to an unfinished chamber, where the drawings are made for sculptures which have never been wrought. Here are the bold and free outlines which we cannot but admire now; outlines which were corrected where faulty by the master hand with its red chalk pencil, coming after the pupil with his black one. In one figure, the arm was made too long; and the rectification by the master,—the red outline over the black, stands as light, fresh, and no doubt effaceable, as in the hour when it was made,—before the Great Ramases was born, or in his childhood.

Then comes another staircase, and then more passages, with their ceremonial paintings: and at length, the great hall,—which yet is not the most interesting of these chambers of the grave. The most remarkable thing in it that meets the eye is the picture of the states through which the soul has to pass, after

* *Lettres sur l'Egypte.*

leaving the lower hemisphere, and entering upon the abodes of the sun. Of these abodes there are twelve, each shown by a door valve, disclosing a mummy, and guarded by a serpent.—Each serpent has a name;* and all have the legend “It dwells above this great door, and opens it to the god Sun.”—One beautiful illustration is of the connexion of the deceased with time. The mummy stands with a chain round his neck, which is held by a procession of twenty-four figures, each with a star over its head. These are the Hours; and in another tomb I saw the same company, telling the season of the year by their appearance; those betokening the night being dark, and standing near together; those betokening the day being lighter, and further apart. If Champollion reads the legends of these spheres and spirits in the tombs aright, we have some light as to the expectations of these ancient worshippers. He translates thus, about the inhabitants of two series of abodes: “These hostile souls see not our god when he casts the rays from his disk: they no longer dwell in the terrestrial world; and they hear not the voice of the great god when he traverses their zones.” “These have found grace in the eyes of the great god. They dwell in the abodes of glory; those in which the heavenly life is led. The bodies which they have abandoned will repose for ever in their tombs, while they will enjoy the presence of the Supreme God.” †

In the side chambers are devices yet waiting for their interpretation:—flames, heads and headless bodies, men bound, or standing feet uppermost, or lying on their

* Champollion's *Lettres sur l'Egypte*.

† *Ibid*.

backs,—or with their heads just leaving their shoulders ; with the scarabæus in the boat, and other animal symbols which show that these are not, as some have hastily supposed, human sacrifices (which did not make a part of Egyptian worship,) but were probably a symbolical representation of the process of initiation into the priestly mysteries.

The sarcophagus chamber is wonderfully fine. After exploring it as well as we could with the lights we carried,—picking out the devices on the walls, but discerning nothing of the vaulted ceiling at the end where the sarcophagus stood, we enjoyed seeing the whole lighted up by a fire of straw. I never shall forget that gorgeous chamber in this palace of death. The rich colours on the wall, (especially the profusion of deep red,) were brought out by the flame ; and the wonderful ceiling whose black vault was all starred with emblems, and peopled with lines of yellow figures,—countless, in two vast regiments,—this was like nothing earthly. And it *is* like nothing on the earth.—These starry emblems are what has been called the Zodiac. I should not have discovered or supposed them to bear that meaning : but Champollion, who knew more than anybody else about such things, offers his readings of old Egyptian almanacks—quoting the testimony of Diodorus about “the gilded circle of Osymandyas, which gave the hours of the rising of the constellations, with the influences of each.” Champollion gives us some of these influences :—as, “Orion influences the left ear. 1st hour : Orion influences the left arm. 2nd hour : Sirius influences the heart,” and so on.* Payne

* Lettres sur l' Egypte.

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Martineau

Eastern life, past
and present.

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A photograph of a brown cardboard box with a grid pattern of horizontal and vertical lines. The box is partially open, showing a white interior surface.